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Women of the Bible

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MIRIAM AND HER MAIDENS IN TRIUMPH
By William Hensel

Women of the Bible

THEIR SERVICES IN HOME AND STATE

BY

ANNIE RUSSELL MARBLE

THE CENTURY CO.

NEW YORK & LONDON

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WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

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To

L. CLARK SEELYE, D.D., LL.D.

PRESIDENT OF SMITH COLLEGE: 1873-1910

WHOSE GUIDANCE INSPIRED HIS STUDENTS
TO LOVE THE BIBLE AND HIGH IDEALS,
WHOSE FRIENDSHIP HAS BEEN A
BENEDICTION IN THEIR LIVES:

THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

554299

PREFACE

THESE chapters are an inadequate expression of many years of Bible study and teaching, and of the pleasurable incentive given to such research by a class of young women. No attempt is made to discuss, or even to suggest, any theological questions nor to stress any doctrinal creeds. The effort of the author has been to vitalize women who are mentioned in biblical literature, as fully as is possible from historical sources and sympathetic imagination. Some of them belong to definite periods of history; others are, perhaps, creations of myth and poetic story. Whatever may be the type, it has been the purpose of this book to make them somewhat more real and to accentuate their humanity in its relation to their own times and to ours. Less familiar biblical references and quotations from other sources are cited in the Notes and Bibliography.

The author would express thanks to the editors of "The Congregationalist" for permis-

sion to reprint certain portions of these chapters. Thanks are given to the librarians in New York, Boston, and Worcester, and at Williams College, who have assisted the author in research. Deep appreciation is due to the helpful services of Rev. Robert W. McLaughlin, D.D., in revision of text. To the publishers, Houghton, Mifflin Company, Dodd, Mead & Company, Charles Scribner's Sons, King-Richardson Co., Harcourt, Brace & Co., and Boni & Liveright, acknowledgment is made for permission to use literary extracts as noted in the text.

ANNIE RUSSELL MARBLE.

Worcester, Massachusetts,
October 1, 1923.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Introduction; The Story of Eve	3
II	The Hebrew Woman in Her Home . . .	10
III	Wives of the Bible: Some of Them Were Wise and Some Were Foolish	42
IV	Mothers in Israel	110
V	Women in Patriotic and Religious Service .	164
VI	Friends and Co-Workers	224
	Bibliography	293
	Index	309

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Miriam and her maidens in triumph . .	*Frontispiece*
Jephthah's daughter	36
Deborah, a prophetess	72
Hannah, Eli and the infant Samuel	138
Salome, daughter of Herodias	160
Ruth gleaning in the field of Boaz	188
Ahab and Jezebel	230
The charity of Dorcas	286

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION; THE STORY OF EVE

WOMEN of the Bible—not Heroines nor Martyrs—are the subjects of these studies. Some of them have been revered as saints; others have been acknowledged as sinners. Some of them have been called "wise women"; others have been examples of sinful foolishness: contrast Deborah and Huldah with Zeresh, wife of Haman, and Gomer, wife of Hosea. A few of these women bore large share in political and religious crises; the majority of them were home-makers, sometimes in nomadic tents, sometimes in walled cities. Through modern eyes, with historic background, we would seek to visualize certain types and individuals of "the eternal feminine" as recorded in biblical history, legend, song, and story. Seeking to avoid the too general mistake of "reading back" into their lives the standards

and customs of far later periods, we would recognize their essential qualities of womanhood, with varied environment, in the days of clans and prophets, in the time of one monarchy and the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, in the lifetime of Jesus and his apostles.

Among these women were heroic patriots, like Miriam, Deborah, Esther, and Judith; their successors have been Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale, and Edith Cavell. Some of these women —like Abigail, wife of David, and the Shunammite friend of Elisha, like Anna, the aged prophetess, and Priscilla, the co-worker with Paul—possessed

> The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength and skill.

Other women of Hebrew history were dominated by evil impulses, and their names have become signals of social menace—Jezebel and Athaliah, Delilah and Herodias. To "the young man void of understanding," the "clamorous and wilful woman" of the old proverb-maker is still "in the streets, now in the broad places, and lieth in wait at every corner." It is as true today, as it was a thousand years before Jesus came, that "A worthy woman is the crown of

her husband. But she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones."

In history of past and present, there are records of scores of women of strong influence for good or evil; there are millions of "just ordinary women," as they have been called in depreciation—mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, nurses, friends, and co-workers—who have formed the sure, potent background of home and state among primitive and civilized peoples. They have seemed negative and inarticulate, in contrast with their more pronounced "sisters"; but, like so many of the finest things in life, they have been "revealed in expressive silence." In biblical narrative, brief space has been accorded some of these faithful, "ordinary" women, like Leah and Jochebed, like Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, and "Naaman's little maid," like Dorcas and Lydia and "the elect lady"; but their quiet influence, in varied forms of service, cannot be lightly regarded by thoughtful mothers, teachers and social workers of the twentieth century.

"The perfect woman" belongs to the realm of poetry; her photography is as idealistic in the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs as it is in the familiar lines by Wordsworth. Super-men and

super-women are neither alluring nor convincing, in modern judgment. To the Hebrew writers, woman was often difficult to interpret; even to our own day she is sometimes called "an unsolved riddle." Much of the difficulty arises from the effort to differentiate too strongly the two sexes. While it is true that "male and female created He them," yet humanity, with its mixed good and evil, with its contradictions and varied aspirations, is the basic quality of men and women alike. It will be the effort of these pages to reveal the Hebrew father and mother, son and daughter, in domestic and racial traits, emphasizing the general influences of the women in education, household management, hospitality, prophetic inspiration, and industry, during periods of moral and religious elevation and decline.

The Story of Eve

The Hebrews delighted in stories and myths. They have often been called, in history, "the childlike race." To the legendary and mythical tales, told to generations of children from the folk-lore of Egypt, Chaldea, and other primitive peoples, they gave a new meaning, a racial inter-

pretation, blending the spiritual with the sensuous. Just as they appropriated the tribal god, Yahweh, and extended his dominance of mingled severity and benignity over their increasing clans, so they adapted many of the ancient legends to their own early history, and used them as moral and religious lessons. It is impossible to locate, chronologically, some of these old-time stories that were "written down" by later scribes, but we may easily imagine the reiteration of the tales of Eve and Adam, of Noah and the ark, of Samson and David, of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

However one may prefer to interpret the old story of Eve, whether as myth, allegory, or sermon, Eve is Woman. As the Hebrew writers have retold this story of "the first man and woman in the garden," they have portrayed in Eve many of the generic qualities of womanhood through the ages. She is alluring and persuasive; she is curious and ambitious for knowledge and possession. She is guided by intuitions, not by reason. She paid the price of her impulses as the repentant wife, the burden-bearing Mother of All Living. *She* paid the price of her venturesome defiance of fixed laws just as her modern daughters, in real life, fiction, and

drama, have suffered the penalties of disobedience of accepted standards. In the character of Eve, in Bible story and Milton's adaptation in "Paradise Lost," one recognizes womanhood with strong, elemental desires, with compelling ambition, but also with faith that this ambition, gratified, would increase her usefulness to man:

> not death, but life
> Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,
> Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
> Hath touched my sense, flat seems to this and harsh.
> On my experience, Adam, freely taste
> And fear of death deliver to the winds.

Raphael, in his "Consequences of the Fall," has created an Eve that is not romantic but weary at the spinning-wheel, while Adam is tilling the soil "amid thorns and thistles." The modern doctrine of work, as a "blessing not a doom," the eager response to the challenge to conquer and to utilize all elements of earth, air, and sea, tend to reduce our sentimental pity for these exiles from the Garden of the Gods. The chastening of Eve's character, through travail and anxiety, seems to be dramatic and spiritual compensation. In the story of this primal woman, as in the life-stories of to-day, there is the question of justice: why was Eve more severely re-

proached, more heavily punished than Adam? The "double standard" of judgment upon man and woman for offenses existed in the mythical days of Eve; it has not been changed wholly by the centuries of advancement toward sex equality. The Eve of the third chapter of Genesis was not a slave of man but his equal in privileges and responsibilities. Here is a composite picture of young womanhood with its daring and zeal, of maturity with its mingled experiences of pain, sorrow, and service—a picture that is essentially true of womanhood of every century.

CHAPTER II

THE HEBREW WOMAN IN HER HOME

TO the Hebrew woman "home" was a word of deep affection and significance. This was true, in general, from the days of the pioneer nomad, Abraham, and his wife, Sarah, who emigrated from the valley of the Euphrates into Palestine some time between 3000 and 2000 B.C., to the later eras of cities and villages, with their sharp social distinctions in Christ's time. The foundation of the Hebrew nation rested upon family life, in spite of periods of excessive polygamy and outside, demoralizing influences. As one reads the Bible stories and records, or the Apocrypha, Josephus, and other early narrators of Hebrew history, one receives a firm impression that Hebrew women shared with the men in the privileges as well as the dangers and responsibilities of the life of the household, tribe, or walled city. In the earlier period, when the Hebrew immigrants, seeking better pasturage and wider opportunities, left their kinsfolk,

the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, and immigrated into Palestine, living in caves and tents, their life was unlike that of the average "caveman" and "cavewoman." Mutual respect and administration of the home are suggested in the patriarchal family of Abraham and Sarah. Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel were "married lovers" during the years of primitive and pastoral life. Granted that later narrators have touched these early portraits with romance, granted always that the women were of Oriental standards and untrained minds, yet the status of women during these pioneer times seems to have surpassed, in many ways, that among the Babylonians and Chaldeans; it was more akin to that of the Egyptian women.

During the period of the clans before and after the Exodus, following the uncertain period of bondage in Egypt, children often bore the names of the mother's family rather than the father's; there were clans of Leah and Rachel, of their handmaids, Zilpah and Bilhah. Names of mothers, as well as fathers, were given in the genealogy of the kings of Judah and Israel. Mothers seemed to have priority of choice in the names of children. I. J. Peritz cites statistics

thus: "of forty-four cases of naming children in the Old Testament, four were ascribed to God, fourteen to men and twenty-six to women." The stories of Abraham's protection of Sarai in Egypt, from the lustful admiration of the king—and its reiteration in the recital of Isaac and Rebekah—are in marked contrast with the custom of certain Arabian nomads, continued to later times, when a husband of a beautiful wife would place her and her tent at the disposal of his guest. The honor of women, especially in the days of pastoral life and tribal leadership, was maintained. It has pleased biblical narrators to emphasize the beauty of the Hebrew maidens and matrons.

Sarah was "very fair to look upon"; Rebekah is described in the same words, and Rachel "was beautiful and well favored"; Tamar, the unfortunate daughter of David, aroused the passions of her brother by her beauty, just as Bath-sheba had ensnared the lust of her father, King David.

In the days of the judges and the kings, the home did not lose its vital influence. Deborah, prophetess and military leader, was mentioned first as wife. The Shunammite woman, whose care and foresight sustained Elisha in his days

of travel and service, was a model executive in her home, caring for the health and comfort of her household and the prophet. Abigail, wife of the churlish Nabal, and later wife of David, was the acknowledged administrator of a large estate, with thousands of sheep and goats, with stores of grain and raisins and figs. When David threatened retribution for Nabal's ugly inhospitality, the young serving-man appealed to his mistress; "Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his house: for he is such a worthless fellow, that one cannot speak to him." There are suggestions of the congenial home and affection of husband and wife in the lives of the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel; by contrast is the symbolic but forceful picture of the tragedy due to the infidelity of Gomer, wife of Hosea. In the New Testament story, the home is in the foreground: the home of Joseph and Mary at Nazareth, the marriage at Cana, the practical comforts and spiritual comradeship of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus at Bethany, and the inspiring, helpful atmosphere of that "abode" of Paul at Corinth, with Aquila and Priscilla, tent-makers and Christian teachers.

Periods of Domestic Decadence and Polygamy

Without question women were more highly regarded in the earlier days of clans and the later time of Christ than in the intervening periods of domestic decadence. Sometimes this lapse was due to excess of wealth and large harems, sometimes to intermarriage with heathen wives, sometimes to voluptuous influences which preceded the Captivity under Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., or to the rigid laws and lax morals among the Pharisees just before the coming of Jesus. Never were women treated with such chivalry and intellectual respect as by the Great Teacher of Christianity; his words and acts have created a status for world womanhood which has reacted upon the Jewish domestic life, as well as that of other nations.

Hebrew women brought upon themselves many of the evidences of social decadence by their idleness, vanity, and loose morals. Isaiah, who knew well the women of wealth and station in the days of Uzziah, Ahaz, Jotham, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, sounded his challenge: "Rise up, ye women that are at ease, and hear

my voice; ye careless daughters, give ear unto my speech. For days beyond a year shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the ingathering shall not come. . . . They shall smite upon the breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine." With more vehemence did Amos, the herdsman prophet, and Hosea of the city, in the same general period, upbraid the women of Judah and Israel for their excessive vanity and lewdness: "They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and terebinths, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters play the harlot, and your brides commit adultery." To Isaiah we are indebted for one of the most interesting, detailed pictures of the vain women of his day and their apparel: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet; therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the heads of the daughters of Zion, and Jehovah will lay bare their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, and the cauls, and the crescents; the pendants, and the bracelets, and

the mufflers; the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the rings and the nose jewels; the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels; the hand-mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils."

With truthful words has Charles Foster Kent characterized polygamy as a deteriorating factor: "Throughout Israelitish history many of the worst evils that have afflicted the state proceeded from the harem." In justice to the Jews, and their excess of polygamous conditions at certain periods, two points should be emphasized. Their neighbors were peoples that accepted and practised polygamy, or plurality of wives, with greater sensuality than was often found among the Hebrews. W. H. Bennett, writing in Hastings's Bible Dictionary, lays stress upon the fact that "polygamy makes each mother much more important to her own children than their father is." Among the Hebrews the concubine, or handmaid who was admitted as wife of her mistress's husband, was treated with consideration; she could not be sold into slavery. Although the earlier heroes, like Abraham, Jacob and Moses, had more wives than one, polygamy was permitted, not encouraged by the

religious leaders. During the days of nomadic settlements, when the desire was to increase the number of "Jehovah's chosen people," the addition of women, as wives and concubines, served both for reproduction and protection. During the sojourn in Egypt there is no evidence of polygamy among the Hebrews. The tendency of the Levitical laws was toward the abolishment of "many wives" rather than their increase. As the Hebrews conquered their neighboring tribes, like the Amalekites, Amorites, and other peoples generally classified as Canaanites or Philistines, they intermarried in spite of decrees against such sacrilege, and the "many wives" increased under the judges and the kings. Gideon "had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten" from his "many wives." Mention is made, with implied reproach, of the son, Abimelech the conspirator, as the son "of his concubine that was in Shechem."

David's harem included many foreign wives; such were the mothers of Absalom and Rehoboam. Both David and Solomon chose this method of increasing their political influence, but the historical recorders never approved of the result upon the purity of life and religion of the people. Not easily forgotten are the later

influences of the heathen queens, Jezebel and Athaliah, and the degrading worship of the god Astarte. The dramatic, harrowing story in the last chapters of Judges, which has been called the Outrage of Gibeah, is a sad commentary upon the treatment of women on two occasions. The first part of the tale—possibly a folk-story—tells of the outrage and maltreatment, until she died, of the concubine of a certain Levite of Ephraim. Seeking hospitality in Gibeah of the Benjamites, this horrible calamity befell the woman at the hands of "certain base fellows." As if in apology or defense of the Israelites, the chronicler adds: "And it was so that all who saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider it, take counsel, and speak." Even more brutal is the sequel, in this time of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Dividing the body of his dead concubine into twelve pieces, the Levite sent these "throughout all the borders of Israel," soliciting coöperation in punishment for the Benjamites. The battle raged fiercely, their towns were ravaged and their men of valor fell, twenty and five thousand men. Moreover, the men of Israel had sworn

at Mizpah, "saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife." The tribe was faced with extermination, but the vow must be observed; recall the final act in this legendary drama, comparable to the rape of the Sabine Women: "And they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; and see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. . . . And the children of Benjamin did so . . . and built the cities and dwelt in them."

Sharp and severe were the revenges upon those who defiled the purity of Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah, and Tamar, the daughter of David. Not alone individuals suffered for such crimes, but whole communities, like that of Shechem, were made captive, according to the biblical story. Thus by deed and law did the religious leaders among the Hebrews seek to purify the domestic atmosphere. In Levitical decrees both man and woman committing adultery, if the woman is the wife of another, "shall die." The woman guilty of infanticide, and the daughter of a priest who "played the harlot,"

were to die by burning or stoning. On the other hand, women were protected against false witness by their husbands regarding their chastity; if the charge was true, the woman must die by stoning; if the husband had falsefied, he must pay a heavy fine to the father of the damsel; he must be "chastised" and live with his wife "all his days." A man who seduced a damsel "in the field," where she could not summon help, was sentenced to die. Divorce was permitted to a man if his wife "shall find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her"; for this cause he may give her "a bill of divorcement" and she may marry again but never remarry her first husband.

These Levitical laws, and others, were abused and transgressed, as is evident in the records in Kings and Chronicles and the prophecies of Jeremiah, Micah, and Malachi, as well as in the words of Jesus, in response to the foolish questions of the Pharisees, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" There is a significant sentence in the gentle, firm answer of Jesus to this question, and the later one about the command of Moses and the "bill of divorcement"; "He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put

away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so." While polygamy was permitted and practised during a large part of Hebrew history, careful provision was made for the protection of captive women who were made concubines, for "secondary wives" and their children. They could be given their freedom, but they could not be sold for money "as a slave." Dr. Alfred Edersheim, in "Sketches of Jewish Social Life," has stressed this point of legal justice, saying, "The tendency of Mosaic legislation was in the direction of recognizing the rights of woman with a scrupulousness which reached down even to the Jewish slaves and a delicacy that guarded her most sensitive feelings."

Equality of Women Social Rather than Legal

In spite of such direct testimonies to the safeguarding of womanhood among the Hebrews, and the potent influences of certain women upon civic and religious life at varied periods, admitting that such recognition was far in excess of that of contemporaneous peoples of Arabia and Assyria, the conviction remains that the equality was *social and domestic* rather than *legal.*

The father was the acknowledged ruler of the family. He was "the head" in business and religious affairs. The words of Jehovah to Eve were verified: "he [thy husband] shall rule over thee." The father's domination included his wife and all her possessions, the children, sons and daughters-in-law, and all members of the household. He could sell his children into slavery, if so inclined, but there are few indications of such tyranny. The personal belongings of his wife, or wives, and of his children were his by legal right. It is doubtful if the woman could hold property, or transact business, with legal approval. The eldest son succeeded his father as "head" of the family, but he was enjoined to care for his mother and sisters.

As in all Oriental and many European countries, in the past, the bride was sought for the eldest son by the latter's father. From several incidents, it is clear that the bride's consent was asked, especially if she was to leave her home, as in the case of Rebekah. Without doubt, the mother shared in these conferences and nuptial plans. Thus did Rebekah urge Isaac to send Jacob to her own kindred to find a fitting wife. An interesting side-light upon a daughter's

courage and independence is found in the few verses about Achsah, the daughter of Caleb. When her father gave her in marriage to Othniel, as a reward of the young man's valor in battle, Achsah was not wholly satisfied with her dowry of a certain field; she made a visit to her father and made her request, in a tone of dominant will, "And she said, Give me a blessing; for that thou hast set me in the land of the South, give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs." Surely, there was sometimes a spirit of adventure as well as submission among these Hebrew women! Certain refusals were permitted to the wives, according to later rabbinical writings, if the "terms" offered by the husbands were too onerous; or, again, "A man could not oblige his wife to follow him if he moved either from a township to a town or the reverse," says Dr. Edersheim.

Respect and Affection in the Home

Although the father was supreme over his household, just as Yahweh or Jehovah was both ruler and father of his people, the home-relations were those of reciprocal affection and responsibility. No Levitical law was more rig-

idly enforced than the fifth. The sons and daughters must respect, obey, and care for their parents to the end of their lives. This duty, required and fulfilled, has given, to the Jews of all time, a status of family honor and sustenance. Said the older writer, "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children. . . . He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Later interpreters have assured us that this word "rod" is symbolic rather than literal, the meaning being that children should be restrained and controlled. Said the more gracious Teacher, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" "Children, obey your parents in the Lord" was an admonition of earlier and later preachers; it had a corollary in the words of the apostle, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." These reflections of Hebrew domestic codes contain many a nugget of truth and helpfulness for this later day of relaxed authority in the home. There is a ring of challenge and uplift in such words as these: "Ye shall fear every man his mother and

his father; and ye shall keep my sabbath: I am Jehovah your God,"

Within the typical home there was mutual love and its courteous expressions. Fathers kissed their sons as well as daughters, in greeting and on festivals. To the sons and daughters alike was the command, "Honor thy father and thy mother . . . keep the commandment of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thy heart." It is noteworthy that the mother as well as the father is included in these admonitions; often the mother has priority of mention. In Talmudic times daughters were deplored, especially as "the first-born"; one may readily understand this feeling in view of the religious and legal status of the eldest son. In truth, in every land and every age, there is open or latent rejoicing at the birth of a "man-child" to young parents. Childlessness was considered a curse as well as a sorrow; witness the prayers of many women in their sterility, from Sarah, Rachel and Hannah to Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist. In sincere reflection of the Hebrew love of home and children, the Psalmist wrote:

Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah;
And the fruit of the womb is his reward.
As arrows in the hand of a mighty man,
So are the children of youth.
Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them;
They shall not be put to shame,
When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

While the marriage festival was the most important social event in a Hebrew clan or city—and its varied features are well depicted in the Song of Songs—the feast and rejoicing on the eighth day after the child's birth were of vital significance. They combined the social and religious elements. Then the boy was circumcised; then the child was named. The next event was the offering of purification when a son was forty days old, or when a daughter was eighty days old; if the first-born was a son, five shekels was the money offering. The offerings were first-year lambs or pigeons or turtle-doves, according to the financial condition of the father and mother. On Sabbath eve the devout Hebrew gathered his family for special instruction and blessings, and for a festival of food and song. Women had part in the Temple services, although they must not approach beyond the Court of Women, in Herod's rebuilt Temple,

"except for sacrificial purposes." Against the wall of the colonnade, which was about the court, were placed the thirteen chests or "trumpets," for contributions. Says Dr. Edersheim: "Into Trumpet III those women who had to bring turtle-doves for a burnt and a sin-offering dropped their equivalent in money, which was daily taken out and a corresponding number of turtle-doves offered. . . . Into this trumpet Mary the mother of Jesus must have dropped the value of her offering when the aged Simeon took the infant Saviour 'in his arms and blessed God.'" Many were the feasts which were shared by both men and women, with the children included in the religious services. These varied at different periods of history, and during the time of heathen worship they were neglected; but a summary of them would recall such occasions as the Passover and Feast of Tabernacles, in our April and October respectively, Feasts of Trumpets and of Dedication in the autumn, and the Feast of Purim, after the heroic deed of Esther, late in the winter.

Not alone in religious festivals did the women take part but, even more often and with greater freedom, in the festivals of harvest and vintage

and on anniversaries of great or romantic events in Hebrew history. Josephus paraphrased a biblical passage when he wrote: "Now the women were an occasion of Saul's envy and hatred to David for they came to meet their victorious army with cymbals and drums, and all demonstrations of joy, and sang thus: The wives said, That Saul hath slain his many thousands of the Philistines. The virgins replied, That David hath slain his ten thousands." Yearly the maidens assembled to sing their Lament for Jephthah's daughter; again, they recalled the friendship of David and Jonathan in an ode or elegy which has become a part of world-poetry. In the earlier days the wells to which the maidens came "to draw water" were the gathering-places for social delight and gossip; in later times, the "gates of the city," in the walled towns, served the same forum for the exchange of news and greetings at the evening hour. The Song of the Well, commemorative of the pilgrimage of the Israelites under Moses from Oboth to Pisgah, with special gratitude for the well at Beer, was, doubtless, one of the familiar odes to later days:

Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:
The well which the princes digged,
Which the nobles of the people delved,
With the sceptre, and with their staves.

The freedom of the women, both in secular and religious celebrations, was more natural and less dangerous in the earlier days than in those of decadent morality. The intrusion of voluptuous rites into heathen worship, which supplanted the purity of Mosaic religion, the increased numbers of harlots and foreign women without protectors in the streets during the days of Jeroboam, Ahab, and other kings of weak resistance to idolatry, brought reactions upon the Hebrew home that tended toward greater restrictions for the women. As the Pharisees came into being as a sect, with their intolerant rites, it was decreed that women must go to the synagogue through "back streets" in some communities, lest they might distract the men from the holy meditations. Jesus brought his challenge to such bigots and restored freedom to women in large measure by preaching to both men and women in the streets, on the hillsides, and even in Solomon's Porch. He sought to restore, also, the status of woman in the home,

not as servile worker nor a pampered, idle member of a harem, but *sharer* with her husband in the demands and rewards of family life.

Food, Furniture, and Domestic Customs

In general environment the home of the Hebrew woman was almost literally "a land flowing with milk and honey." Palestine, in the southern part of Syria, about as large as the State of Massachusetts, is a country of rolling hills, fertile valleys, and waters that abound in fish. On the trade-route from Arabia to Egypt, it was mentioned as early as 2600 B.C. in the biography of Uri, an Egyptian officer under Pepi I of the sixth dynasty. Just when the families or clans (called by their neighbors Hebrews, or "from beyond the river") began their immigrations into this fine agricultural and pastoral land is still disputed. Certain it is that by 1200 B.C. the scattered families had become united into a nation, with neighbors like the Phenicians and Egyptians and Chaldeans of established civilization and sundry tribes, probably kin of the Hebrews, sometimes sharing pasturage in a friendly manner, sometimes fighting and pillaging their outposts like the Moabites, the Edomites, the Amorites, and the Philistines. On the

hills and in the Valley of Esdraelon grazed sheep and herds of cattle. The women shared in tending the sheep during this pastoral period. There was abundance of "butter of kine," of grain and corn, of lentils and beans and millet and wheat and barley, as the years passed with success in agriculture. Vineyards flourished; the land was rich in figs, grapes, and olives, pomegranates and dates, wild honey and savory herbs. In the Sea of Galilee and small streams were fish of many kinds. One may readily imagine that to the Israelites, after the years of bondage and the forty years (by biblical computation) of wandering in the wilderness, this was indeed "the promised land," "the land of plenty," the "land of rich harvests and water-springs."

The tents covered with skins of goats, and huts of the patriarchal period and the wilderness sojourn, gave place to "goodly cities," with gates of brass and iron, with walls and watch-towers. Even in the days of tribal independence, when Gideon and Barak and Jephthah, the "men of valor," were tribal leaders, the Hebrew men and women were guarding their homes, "their little ones," their flocks and herds. When Rachel carried away, hidden in

her sack, the household gods from Laban's fireside to establish her own, though they may have been heathen emblems, she revealed the instinctive love of true womanhood for the symbols of her own hearth and home. Lot's wife has been denounced as disobedient and defiant to the angel when she looked back upon the blazing ruins of Sodom, but the folk-tale has another interpretation: she may have craved one last look at her own abandoned home and hearth.

Upon these hearths the Hebrew women cooked; in later times they had portable stoves of iron filled with hot coals and earthen ovens with a variety of pots and kettles. Far into the later history, "the pot was boiled over the fire of thorn bushes." The Hebrew woman in the days of social righteousness, took pride in making her "wheaten cakes" and her unleavened bread, whatever might be her social rank. Cooking and dressing meat was an art with the Hebrew woman, from the time of Sarah and Abigail to that of the sister of Lazarus. The daughter of David, the fair, unfortunate Tamar, who was seduced by her brother, "took dough, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes." When Samuel remonstrated with the people against their desire for

a king, rather than a prophet of Jehovah as their leader, he portrayed the possible evils which might befall under a monarchy and said, "And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers." The implication was not that such crafts were degrading but that they might have to be performed in a harem, or at the caprice of a king, rather than in a home.

During periods of luxury, cooking fell into disrepute and was relegated to slaves but it was revived among the Jews after their return from captivity. For cooking and other household needs, various utensils are mentioned in the Bible. First, there are the pitchers, useful and graceful in design, that have become a boon to modern artists and dramatic directors. "To draw water from the well" was an honored task, from the days of Rebekah and the daughters of Jethro to those of the woman of Samaria. It is somewhat disillusioning to find that some of these pitchers were "skin bottles" without beauty; others were of pottery. As has been suggested, the women gathered at the wells, at the cool hour of the day, both to fill their pitchers for household use—sometimes for the animals also—and to exchange the news of the

day. Such news might be some small domestic incident; it might be some event of tribal or communal interest; it might be the impressions of some travelers as they passed over the trade-routes through the villages and hamlets of Palestine. Here, also, they sang their songs, perhaps to the accompaniment of the lute or timbrel played by one of the company of women. In imagination, as well as in art, one may picture a group of these Hebrew maidens and younger matrons, with their dark eyes and hair, their clear olive skins, their loose, graceful garments and bright head-veils, balancing the pitchers upon their shoulders, as they talked with gay voices and sang joyful songs. There were occasions when they were serious and sad. When their fathers and brothers were away at war, they must stimulate each other with courage; they must prepare for defensive warfare, if necessary, to save their homes and cities with the same patriotic zeal that inspired Deborah or Jael, the "wise woman of Abel," or Judith of Bethulia. Should the issue be one of victory for the Hebrews, the women would hasten to the gates of the city, watching for the approach of the victors with emotional joy and ardor to

share in the "spoils of war," should they bring back jewels and rich garments.

Mention is made of "earthen vessels," pots for water and oil, kneading troughs, basins and pans, bowls, wooden spoons and mortars. The work of the handmill—the incessant toil of grinding corn—was often performed by slaves or prisoners of war. Women were not exempt from the task, however, as is indicated by the reference of Jesus to the "two women . . . grinding at the mill, one is taken, and one is left." Gathering and carrying firewood upon their heads was another feminine task. Baskets of many kinds and uses are enumerated among the common articles of the household and vineyards. In the days of David and Solomon and the later years of wastefulness and ease, the social classes were sharply drawn; the very poor lacked the comforts of life, while the rich used vessels of gold and silver, candlesticks and lamps of pure gold, couches of ivory and richly wrought draperies. The first houses were tents and huts, or crude structures of clay, brick, and stone. Here was the home even more truly than in the later times of ivory palaces and "cedar chambers painted with vermilion." There were

courtyards and latticed windows, and upper chambers in the houses of the prosperous. The roof was generally flat, affording a place for prayer, for sleeping in warm weather, and for drying flax, wool, and vegetables.

When Rahab hid the spies that were sent forth by Joshua, she "brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof."

Furniture in earlier periods was restricted to mats of goats' hair or of skins, straw mattresses, folding and portable "tables" of skin, and low "stools" of leather and wood. In later times there were importations from Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Rome of divans and couches of gold, ivory, and silver, chests, cabinets, and tables and many another "fleshpot" from beyond the Nile or the Euphrates. Crude lamps of baked clay, with wicks of flax and olive-oil as fuel, were used by the poorer people through the centuries, while the wealthy had candlesticks of bronze, silver, brass, and gold, sometimes standing four feet high.

Hospitality and Education

In every era of Hebrew history, hospitality was emphasized and enjoined. Such was a

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JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

By J. James Tissot

legacy from the Bedouin days. Before there were traveled roads and inns, each clan welcomed any passers-by with their caravans or singly. In large tents there were always apartments for guests. The angel visitors at the tent of Abraham received a typical greeting of hospitality. At times of festivals, like those of the harvest, vintage, or sheep-shearing, or on the days of religious feasts, the roads were thronged with pilgrims. It was the pride of each tribe or settlement to see that the roads were safe for the traveler, safe from overhanging branches, refuse or pitfalls, and from robbers. In the Song of Deborah, one notes among the complaints against Sisera, the marauding captain of the king of Canaan who "oppressed" the Israelites:

In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,
And the travellers walked through byways.

Women coöperated with the men in offering to the stranger-guests the best comforts of their homes, attractive food, water for their feet, clean garments, and gracious words. In the days of Jesus it was customary to hang a curtain in front of the door of a house to indicate that there was room within for guests. To the

Great Teacher and his apostles, many women showed true hospitality: Martha and Mary of Bethany, Joanna and Mary, mother of Mark, Lydia of Thyatira, and many others who followed the examples of the mother and sister of Laban, the daughters of Jethro, the wife of Manoah, and the Shunammite friend of Elisha.

Every Jewish father who failed to teach his son a trade was condemned "as if he had brought him up to be a robber." There seem to have been no specific directions for the education of girls, but they were taught many practical crafts, as well as household accomplishments. Cooking, weaving, spinning, dyeing, "fashioning" of garments, grinding grain and preparing vegetables and fruits for later use, tending, feeding, and watering the cattle and sheep, assisting in sowing and reaping the harvests, caring for the children and managing the slaves and household servants—such were the usual educational courses of the Hebrew girls. To these must be added music and dancing, especially for religious and patriotic festivals. Instruments as well as voice were included in the musical instruction, for the Hebrew women, as well as the young men, were skilled with the

harp and lute, the drum and cymbal, the timbrel and the psalteries, or lyres. The Jewish race have ever been fond of music and gifted in its production, from the days of Miriam and Jephthah's daughter to the modern representatives, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. They have lacked interest and skill in sculpture and painting until later days; possibly the explanation has weight, that such is the result of the Mosaic prohibition against the making of "any graven image."

Some intellectual training was given to the girls. They must have been taught weights and measures and medium of exchange in later times, in order to administer the affairs of the household. They were not "sent to school" as were the boys, after the age of twelve, but they were taught the "Scriptures," the laws, prayers, psalms, and religious antiphonals. The fact that the Hebrew child was not weaned until two or even three years of age enabled the mothers to have vital influence in forming habits of their children, in teaching them religious memory-verses, in telling them folk-tales and racial legends of lifelong influence. Lessons of reverence, obedience, industry and thrift, hospitality and kindness, loyalty and in-

tegrity—such were the vital text-books that educated the Hebrew girl, as well as the boy, in the home that stood for social welfare.

There is one portrayal of an ideal home-maker in biblical lore. It is the familiar recital of "the words of King Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him." Later scholars have asserted that King Lemuel was a descendant of Massa of the stock of Ishmael, and that the biblical passage belongs to the Greek period of later Old Testament history and influence. Whatever may be its chronology, it reveals, in poetic yet forceful words, the embodiment of the cherished attributes of womanhood among the Jews. What were the qualities of this wife and mother? Loyalty and steadfastness of purpose, strength and dignity, honor for her husband and care for her children, so that they "rise up, and call her blessed." She was industrious with hand and brain, far-sighted and efficient:

She riseth also while it is yet night,
And giveth food to her household,
And their tasks to her maidens.
She considereth a field, and buyeth it;
With the fruit of her hand she planteth a vineyard.

To these traits of mental and physical prowess she added certain graces of character:

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor;
Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
She is not afraid of the snow for her household;
For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
She maketh for herself carpets of tapestry;
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

True to the demands of her home, she becomes, also, a helpmate to her husband by her own skill:

She maketh linen garments and selleth them,
And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

This chosen woman is a fine type of Hebrew womanhood at its highest. She is a helpful, loyal wife, a wise mother, a generous mistress and benefactor, a successful "business woman," and a religious influence in home and community, "a woman that feared Jehovah." Does she not fulfil nearly all the aspirations of the well balanced home-maker of the twentieth century?

CHAPTER III

WIVES OF THE BIBLE: SOME OF THEM WERE WISE AND SOME WERE FOOLISH

THE Hebrews regarded marriage as far more than physical self-gratification, as it was among other early peoples. There are proofs of mutual respect and love in the homes of the patriarchs, the prophets, the kings, and the common people of every century of their history. In spite of excess of polygamy at varied times, the ideal of love was never lost, never wholly stained. Recall the question of Elkanah to Hannah, his childless wife, as she mourned: "Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am I not better to thee than ten sons?" Effusive in Oriental sensuousness and imagery, the Song of Songs, whether regarded as romance or symbolism, is a vivid, authentic picture of fervent love between a beautiful maiden and her royal lover. The woman may have been Abishag, the fairest Shunammite maiden that

could be found to "minister" to David in his old age, and to become the cause of jealousy between his sons afterward. She may have been only a nameless, typical maiden from the hills, accompanied by her peasant friends from the village, yearning for her vineyards and fig-trees, overcome by the splendors of court life, yet yielding to pure passion for her royal lover. In any interpretation, the reader finds here, not alone a graphic portrayal of wedding customs among the Hebrews and Syrians—the love-songs, the homage to bride and groom, the feasts and gaiety, the delights of nature—but he reads, also, the poetic, sincere pledge of loyalty of the wife to her "beloved":

Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm;
For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as Sheol;
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
A very flame of Jehovah.
Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
He would utterly be contemned.

Malachi, in symbolic words, reproached any man who would "deal treacherously" with his com-

panion, with the wife of his covenant and his youth." Jesus spoke admonitions to marital faithfulness. Ringing down the ages have come his potent words: "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

With all due recognition of possible evils which may result from the custom of parents' selection of wives for their sons and daughters, one must admit that, in general, the marriages were more stable than in these later days of freedom, often of recklessness, of personal choice and resultant "misfits" and easy divorce. The betrothal, among the Hebrews, was a religious obligation; it was not valid unless the prospective bride gave her consent. If a minor —a girl under twelve years and a day—was unworthily betrothed or "given away" by her father, she could insist upon a divorce. In rabbinical writings it was said that a man married for one of four reasons, "passion, wealth, honour or the glory of God." The first type of wedlock produced "stubborn and rebellious sons"; the second bred lazy, voluptuous children like those of Eli; the third type was that of Ahab and Jezebel, Jehoram and Athaliah, and led to fatal results of heathendom; the fourth brought happiness like that of the patriarchs,

or Boaz and Ruth. "Mixed marriages" were frequent for political purposes—alliances between Palestine, Egypt, Phenicia, and Canaan —but they were deplored; in apostolic writings, "mixed marriages" between Christians and "unbelievers" were sometimes reproved.

Marriage was a religious obligation to Jehovah's "chosen people." Only physical inability, extreme poverty, or special aptitude for temple service could excuse celibacy. Betrothals were accompanied, in later days, by written contracts and gifts. The father had to provide a dowry for his daughters. The marriage festival lasted for a week, with much feasting and flow of wines; sometimes, in periods of moral decadence, it was an occasion of debauch. The parable of the Ten Virgins reflected a custom of long standing, the carrying of lamps with oil, upon long staves, as a part of the bridal procession. Marriage was a favorite symbol with Hebrew writers, especially the prophets, as expression of the intimate, honored relation between Jehovah and his chosen people. Many safeguards existed against immoral marriages; while the law was observed, there were prohibitions against marriage with defectives, minors, and those of too close consanguinity and similar

unfitness. The Hebrews knew and emphasized many laws of hygiene in their purifications and other rites. Coming down to periods of relaxed morals and bigotry, one finds records of the most absurd cases where the biblical phrase, "if she fails to find favor in his sight," was used as basis of divorce. "Going about with loose hair," spinning in the street, talking too familiarly with men, ill treatment of a husband's relatives in his presence, "bawling so loudly that the neighbors would hear her in the adjoining house," were among the "causes for a divorce." The wife could ask for a separation from a husband who was afflicted with "a loathsome disease"; she might even extend her objection to living with him if he was "engaged in a disagreeable or dirty trade, such as that of a tanner or coppersmith." The husband could control his wife's property and even her gains after marriage. In later days education for women, especially instruction in writing, lightened these restrictions and gave the women equality. "Woman's place," however, was generally restricted to the home, to household management, hospitality, and the training of children.

Wives of Lot and Potiphar

Individual wives of biblical literature may be grouped, with elasticity, under the general classes of *wise* and *foolish*. As in all normal human beings, both extremes were found in many women, but, judged by their specific traits and influences, certain of them were much wiser than were others. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, and many more of the most familiar characters will be considered in the chapter upon Mothers, for thus their major qualities were revealed. If we include legends with history, we recall two pioneer women with foolish qualities, as tradition has estimated them, Lot's wife and the wife of Potiphar. The biblical story of Noah and the Flood tells very little about Noah's wife except that she was the mother of three sons and some daughters and that she went with them and the animals into the ark. Persistent and amusing traditions have said that Noah's wife was essentially feminine in her love of gossip; that she delayed the entrance of the family into the Ark because she wished to talk longer with her women-friends,

her "gossips," and that she was unwilling to leave behind her household goods.

Lot's wife has been used as a "fearful example" of disobedience and unbelief. This has been the interpretation by artists, notably Rubens in his "Flight of Lot," where an angel warns her of her fate while she, with clasped hands, has a look of sad longing, as she passes through the gates of Sodom. Above her an evil spirit hovers, looking angrily at the angel and awaiting an opportunity to turn the face of Lot's wife back toward her home. In Raphael's familiar painting, and that by Corot, she has already taken her backward look and is changed into a pillar of salt. Paul Veronese, with similar motive, adds an angel to conduct Lot's two daughters safely out of the city, hurrying them forward towards Zoar. Salt clefts, often six hundred feet high, are found for many miles at the southwest of the Dead Sea. Undoubtedly myth, superstition, and history are commingled in this story of the destruction of Sodom and the tragedy of Lot's wife. Was she one of "the wicked daughters of Sodom" before her marriage? Was her disobedience due, in part, to emotional distress and feminine craving, a strong impulse to take a last look at her home?

One must not condemn this woman too severely. Was Lot superior to his wife? He would sacrifice the purity and honor of his daughters to save the angel visitors from violence. Were the daughters superior, who seduced their drunken father and bore children by him? It is explained that such an act was imperative to prevent the extermination of the race. Altogether, this is a grim, dramatic tale of prehistoric days.

Potiphar's wife is far more recognizable as a type. She is the bold, lustful, cruel woman of every age. As wife of the prime minister, she was evil in mind and morals. She used her social and political influence to endanger the life of a young man who was "comely and well-favored" because he appealed to her lust. Josephus, who gives the story in much detail, says of Potiphar's wife, "she was fallen in love with him both on account of the beauty of his body and his dexterous management of affairs." This historian says also that Potiphar "was chief cook to King Pharaoh," that he had bought and educated Joseph, when his brothers sold him in captivity at seventeen years of age. Failing of her design and desire, Potiphar's wife was cruel in her revenge. It brought

Joseph to prison and to a fortunate issue for him; it might have caused his death had Potiphar been more savage in his retaliation, or more sure that the charges of his wife were justified. Possibly her husband knew her weak passions and was lenient toward Joseph. The resistance and moral purity of the young man, surrounded by moral pollution, and with political honors as a possible recompense for yielding, emphasize Joseph's finer strain of idealism. He was a worthy son of Rachel and Jacob, at his highest manliness; he was a true grandson of the faithful idealist, Isaac. One queries what were the qualities of the woman whom Joseph chose for his wife, the mother of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Zipporah, Wife of Moses, and Her Family

In contrast with these two wives, accounted as foolish or wicked, was Zipporah, the wife of Moses, the daughter of Jethro, high priest of Midian. Again, from Josephus we learn that the Midianite women were the "handsomest, decked and trimmed to the highest degree," upon another occasion. We know more about Jethro, or Raguel, than about his daughter from biblical records, but it is safe to assume that

she was attractive, loyal, and helpful to her father and husband, a good mother of her two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. The meeting of this maiden and Moses was romantic. Jethro owned large estates and flocks. He had seven daughters who came to the stream near his home, to fill their troughs with water daily for the cattle. Shepherds often drove them away. Thither came Moses, who had fled into Midian after he had attacked two Egyptians for maltreating Hebrew workmen. He drove away the troublesome shepherds, "delivered them out of the hands of the shepherds." Here is a delightful picture of pastoral chivalry! Moses gained the gratitude of their father and was given Zipporah as his wife. In this new home, where Moses was received and called "an Egyptian," he "was keeping the flock of Jethro" when the miraculous commission came to him, from the burning bush, to deliver the Israelites from their bondage and to lead them back to Palestine. It is doubtful if Zipporah was with Moses in Egypt during the periods of the plagues, although she was brave and faithful, as is shown in the incident of the circumcision of her son. She was probably with her father in Midian during these years and until after the Exodus. A little

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later, after the "fall of manna," Jethro came to Moses, accompanied by Zipporah and their two sons. Moses met them near Mount Sinai, where his vision had come to him. To the biblical account is added, by Josephus, the statement that Moses here "made a feast and offered sacrifice" on this reunion with his family. Bernardino Betto of the Umbrian School has painted this scene in "The Journey of Moses" in frescoes of Sistine Chapel.

An interesting side-light upon Jethro is the part played by him when he came to the camp of Moses in the wilderness, with his daughter and grandsons, and observed the heavy task that Moses was performing. Jethro advised wisely —and Moses accepted his counsel—when he planned for the Israelites the court of counsels and judges which became the foundation of Mosaic administration. "And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people [in judgment from the morning until the evening] he said . . . The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for the thing is too heavy for thee: thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God be

with thee: be thou for the people to God-ward, and bring thou the causes unto God: and thou shalt teach them the statutes and the laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. . . . And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves."

After Moses "let his father-in-law depart" into his own land, Zipporah probably remained with her husband and sons. There is no mention of her death. Possibly it was before the lapse of Moses, when he took "a Cushite woman" for his wife, and thus aroused the resentment of Aaron and Miriam; one would like to believe that Zipporah was dead at this time. There was, however, a tradition that the "Ethiopian wife" of Moses had been married to him before he fled from Egypt into Midian, as "the term of agreement" with the Ethiopian king for peace when Moses was waging battle with him in behalf of Pharaoh. Another side-light, which

emphasizes the gifts of this family of Jethro and Zipporah, is found in the later effort of Moses to retain as his companion Hobab, the son of Jethro and brother of Zipporah: "And Moses said unto Hobab . . . We are journeying unto the place of which Jehovah said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good. . . . And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes."

The Wives of Samson

Several generations after the death of Moses, when the judges were the religious and military leaders of the Israelitish tribes, there was a sad woman, the wife of Manoah, of the family of the Danites. Like Sarah before her time and Hannah afterward, she longed for a child. In her brooding there came to her an angel who promised that she should bear a son who should be a Nazarite, and who should "begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." She must not drink wine nor strong drink, nor eat anything that was "unclean," for this son was

to be "dedicated" to Jehovah, so said the angel-visitor who called himself "wonderful." Many are the stories that have been told about this son, Samson, and his matchless strength and clever riddles. He was the Hebrew prototype of the Greek Heracles in strength and cunning. This man, who could rend a lion that roared against him "as he would have rent a kid" by the strength of his bare hands, was a giant physically but a dwarf in his will-power and moral resistance. His mother must have been perplexed and worried if she endeavored to make the prophecy of the angel tally with the character of her son. He did, however, become a fighter against the Philistines. His marriage was a disappointment to his parents, for he "went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistine. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she

pleaseth me well." It was on the way to Timnah to conclude the plans for the marriage that Samson slew the lion. His parents ceased to dissuade him from his choice, for "he sought an occasion against the Philistines."

This wife of Samson must have been alluring in speech as well as features, for "he talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well." Then he made a wedding feast lasting seven days, to which thirty companions, young men of the Philistines, came. To them, as a form of entertainment, he spoke the riddles about the lion and the honey that he had found and eaten from its carcass. To the Eastern peoples, a riddle is a vital matter; it must be solved, or the honor of the contestants is lost. And Samson had promised, to these young men, thirty pieces of linen garments and thirty changes of raiment if they could guess the riddle in seven days of the feast. Then appeal was made to Samson's wife—an appeal of forceful warning, for if she should not "entice" her husband and thus declare the riddle, she and her father's house would be burned. With typical mode of attack for certain women, she entered upon her part of the plot to save these men from humiliation. She wept and reproached him, declaring, "Thou

dost but hate me, and lovest me not." One's sympathy goes out to Samson as the story progresses. It would be hard for any bridegroom to withstand such incessant appeals: "And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted; and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she pressed him sore; and she told the riddle to the children of her people." This wife of Samson must have popularized tears as a woman's weapon for future ages.

Dramatic was the sequel of this tale. Angered, Samson took vengeance upon the men of Ashkelon, and then returned to his father's house. He seemed, however, to yearn after his weeping, alluring wife. Again he went down, in the time of the wheat harvest, with a kid, to see and enjoy his wife; but she had been given to one of the "companions." Suavely her father told his excuse; "I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? Take her, I pray thee, instead of her." Not so easily was Samson satisfied; with firebrands between the tails of three hundred foxes, he set fire to the standing grain and the olive-yard of the Philistines, and had

his revenge. The wife and her father became the victims, in turn, of the wrath of the Philistines and were burned; in retaliation, Samson "smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter."

One might surmise that this giant Nazarite would learn his lesson and avoid seductive women, but twice he was victimized by them again. Once he was surrounded and attacked, while he was with a harlot at Gaza; it was then that he carried off the bars and "doors of the gate of the city" up to the top of Mount Hebron in his muscular arms. The third Samson tale is the most familiar because of the wily woman, Delilah, in the Valley of Sorek, another woman whom he "loved" and who "sold him to the Philistines for eleven hundred pieces of silver," that were promised to her severally by "the lords of the Philistines." In literature Delilah shares with Vivian the reputation of the deceitful, seductive woman. She was keen as well as intriguing. It was a contest of wits, as well as love-tokens, between the man and woman until "it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, that his soul was vexed unto death. And he told her all his heart."

There is no biblical authority for Milton's characterization of Delilah returning to Samson, in his prison-house and blindness, offering to atone for her faithlessness. "Samson Agonistes" reveals a strong man, able to see at last that he has been seduced, that Delilah is untrustworthy. The character of his father is another triumph for the poet. She is seemingly repentant in her first words:

I was a fool, too rash and quite mistaken,
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson;
Afford me place to show what recompense
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided;—though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other scenes want not their delight.—
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favorable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care
With nursing diligence, to me glad office
May ever tend about thee to old age
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied,
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

When she is repulsed, her pleading denied, then she shows the venom of her nature, al-

though she ascribes her deed to patriotism to her Philistine people, declaring that she will be ranked, in heroic memory, beside

> Jael, who with inhospitable guile,
> Smote Sisera sleeping through the temples nailed.

The chorus sounds the true character of Delilah, as she departs:

> She 's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
> Discovered in the end, till now concealed.

Three Wives of David: Michal, Abigail, and Bath-sheba

Three of the many wives of David stand forth with marked, varied personalities. Michal was "the wife of his youth." She was one of the daughters of Saul; her sister's name was Merab. When David, as a shepherd-lad, went up to the court of Saul to play upon the harp or lute, to soothe the mentally distraught condition of the excitable king, it may have been Michal and her maidens who "stood about" and were amazed at the beautiful youth and his magical music. Josephus arouses one's amused query by his description of the appearance of David as a youth: "He appeared to be of a yellow complexion, of a sharp sight, and a comely per-

son in other respects also." There are other interesting comments by Josephus upon this wife of David and her confessed love for the humble peasant lad. Anticipating a later period, evidently, the historian asserts that "Saul heard this gladly, as intending to make use of it as a snare against David, and he hoped that it would prove the cause of destruction and of hazards to him."

Without question this king's daughter "loved David." She was a brave girl, with initiative and daring, with an equally strong resentment, in later life, of her husband's attitude toward her and his kingship. Few young wives of her time, especially of royal blood, would have ventured to defy their fathers and to save their husbands by such a clever ruse as she invented when Saul, angered because "all Israel and Judah loved David," determined to have him captured and killed in his home with Michal. The story is familiar, how she urged David to listen to her, how she let him down through the window, declaring, "If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain." Then, with inventive acumen, she placed, in his bed, the teraphim, or household gods, and a pillow of goats' hair at the head and covered this with

the bedclothes. Again, Josephus makes an ingenious interpretation; he says that she put in the bed a goat's liver; then "she made the leaping of the liver, which caused the bed-cloaths to move also, that David breathed like one that was asthmatic." Michal's courage lasted until her father faced her with a question of her disobedience, and then she gave the excuse of self-defense; such a lie would not seem disloyal to a woman of that time and standards. She was brave and resourceful.

Saul had his revenge, however, and married Michal to Paltiel, the son of Laish, while David was away on military exploits, strengthening himself with the tribes so that he might become king. After he was acclaimed as King of Israel, following the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, Abner, the cousin of Saul and a captain in his army, revolted and sought to join forces with David. Then David made a fixed condition saying, "Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face." So she was taken from her husband and returned to David as his wife. A tribute to her attractiveness and fine character is found in the

vivid picture of this scene: "And her husband [Paltiel] went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return: and he returned."

It would be gratifying to believe that David's deep love for Michal and her reciprocal affection for him brought about this return and a happy issue. Unfortunately, one must confess that David had enough of shrewdness to realize that if Michal, Saul's daughter, was reinstated in his home—or his harem, as it was by that time—he would thereby increase his claims to the throne of Judah and his popularity among Saul's allies. The result was not romantic. Michal was now one of several wives. Perhaps her love for David had waned; perhaps she loved Paltiel better, for he was a faithful lover-husband. An incident that has been much discussed showed her antipathy to David when she thought he was lowering his dignity as a king. When, after the conquests by David, the ark was brought back into Jerusalem from Baale-judah, David's emotional and religious ecstasy exceeded ordinary expression. He led the rejoicing in a riotous dance. Michal saw him "leaping and dancing before Jehovah," and "she despised him in her heart." With

dignity and resentment she taunted him with "uncovering" himself "in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!" It would seem that Michal should be respected for this evidence of refined womanhood; but the Hebrew historian was on the side of David and of his explanation that his dance was "before Jehovah," and the punishment was recorded: "And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death." Other traditional and historical narrators, including Josephus, say that she had five children, as wife of Paltiel. Josephus softens her words of rebuke to David. There has been difficulty in reconciling this statement of Michal's sterility with the story of Rizpah and her tragic watch over the unburied bodies of her two sons and of five sons of Michal, daughter of Saul. Probably these were the sons of Merab, the elder daughter of Saul; Merab was the wife of Adriel and these are called the "five sons of Michal whom she bare to Adriel."

Into the life of David while he was a free-lance, an ancient Robin Hood, before the days of his kingship, there came another woman of fine character and strong influence. Abigail, the wife of Nabal, and later wife of David, is one

of the most convincing, heroic women of biblical history. Nabal, whose possessions were in Carmel, was a "very great" man in wealth; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats and corresponding estates and vineyards. David and his men had encamped near by and had protected Nabal's flocks and herds from marauders in a time of famine. Now the sheep-shearing was at hand; David sent his men to ask for some supplies: "Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thy hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David." It was a courteous request, considering the service rendered. Nabal was not alone a dullard, whose name signified fool or folly, but he was churlish and a drunkard. Abigail must have already deplored her marriage and tried to make amends for his stupidity and "evil doings." Insulting was the answer which he sent back to David, asking "Who is David? There are many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men of whom I know not whence they are?"

When this reply, and David's preparations for retaliation, were reported to Abigail, she

showed her "good understanding"; she acted decisively. She had mental astuteness as well as "a beautiful countenance" and charm. Equipped with two hundred loaves, two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched grain and one hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, she mounts upon her ass and departs for David's tent, with an escort of her "young men." She might have sent these supplies by a messenger, but she knew the value of a personal appeal. David, still cherishing resentment and ready to seize Nabal's possessions, sees Abigail and goes out to meet her. Prostrating herself before him—the woman of wealth, beauty, and dignity before the untitled, youthful warrior—she offers to take the blame and the punishment for her husband. This may have been "good policy"; it may have been a woman's genuine self-sacrifice. She does not hesitate, however, to admonish David to be lenient for his own future memories. Admitting that her husband's name indicates his character, his folly, and assuring David that *she* did not see the young men whom he sent for the supplies, she thus indicates that *she* was, generally,

the administrator of the estate. Prophesying that David will soon be made a "lord," with the aid of Jehovah, she urges upon him forgiveness for Nabal's churlishness, for he will be glad, "when he shall be appointed prince over Israel," that he has not avenged himself nor "shed blood without cause."

Abigail, the gracious and far-seeing, the woman of keen mind and discriminating words, returns with the assurance of protection. She returns to a drunken husband. The next morning, when Nabal is somewhat sober, she tells him her story with courage and determination. The sequel is satisfying to romantic fancy. Nabal becomes ill, probably from paralysis; he lives only ten days, and David soon sends for Abigail to come to his tent as his wife. This marriage brought to David much wealth and political strength, for Abigail was of the house of Caleb. Unfortunately, for unalloyed romance, the narrator adds, "David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they became both of them his wives." Abigail bore children; the first, named Chileab, probably died, as no later mention is made of him. Both Ahinoam and Abigail, with their sons and daughters, were

taken captives by the Amalekites but were rescued by David after a battle and lived to share his kingdom and fame.

Sharply contrasted with Abigail was Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. For her sake, or because of her extraordinary beauty and its reaction upon the king, David committed the "sin" which has always been regretted as the "blot on his scutcheon." Josephus tries to relieve the harshness of any judgment upon David by reiterating that "he was otherwise naturally a righteous and a religious man, and one that firmly observed the laws of our fathers." Moreover, Bath-sheba was "one of extraordinary beauty, and therein surpassed all other women, so that he was overcome by her beauty." The Bible story is frank in certain features of this episode in the life of the warrior-king, for it happened in his earlier manhood. Other historians, with Marjorie Strachey in her romance, "David, Son of Jesse," have amplified the earlier stages of the intrigue, the effort to conceal the fact of their adultery (for Bath-sheba might suffer death if it were known) and the yet more direful condition of her pregnancy while her husband was away, fighting for David. Although a Hittite, Uriah was a friend

as well as neighbor to David. David might have spared his life, had Uriah gone to his own home and his wife, when he returned for a short respite from the war. He refused, however, to desert the other armor-bearers who were sleeping in front of David's house. The plot to place Uriah in the battle-front so as to insure his death was discussed and executed by Joab, who henceforth knew the guilty secret of David and Bath-sheba. When Nathan, the prophet, brought home to David the enormity of his crime in the tender story of the "one ewe lamb," and when the first child born of this wedlock died, David showed his deeper, more religious nature. Nathan seemed to have become an adviser of Bath-sheba when, in later years, she extorted from the aged David a promise that her son Solomon should succeed to the throne over his elder brother. Solomon, whose birth-date was about 1035 B.C., showed signs of wisdom and resource in his youth. "Nathan felt that Solomon was his special ward from birth," says Dean Farrar, and so he helped Bath-sheba to gain her ambition. He adds, "To Bathsheba must have fallen the chief share in the education of her child and it is impossible to suppose that her influence could have been very good."

Wives of Solomon and Jeroboam I

At casual thought, it would seem as if Solomon should have been the son of the wise, efficient Abigail rather than of the beautiful, persuasive, but weak Bath-sheba. He increased all the wealth and glory that had been his father's; he increased, also, the size of his harem. The exact number of David's wives is not recorded; he had seven that are mentioned by name, with "many more wives and concubines." The wives of Solomon are estimated in the hundreds, if we accept biblical records and the words of Josephus, who gives the aggregate as seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Many of these women were kept in the luxurious harem for political purposes; they chronicled the king's alliances with Sidonians and Tyrians, with Ammonites and Edomites. It was a depressing period for free, normal home life, the reign of the rich and wise Solomon. Even if an extra cipher has been added to the number and even if the figures should be seventy wives and thirty or eighty concubines, one does not query why it was written of Solomon, "his wives turned away his heart after other gods."

The marvel is that he kept his sanity and physical well-being as long as he was able to reign. Such "enervating self-indulgence," as Dean Farrar has well phrased it, would create less surprise and censure in Solomon's day than in ours, but even then it was deplored by Hebrew writers of later years.

The wife who held first place, chronologically and socially, was the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, on account of an "affinity" which Solomon wished to make with this country. He brought her with great pomp "into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of Jehovah." We know nothing about this queen, but it is safe to assume that she was well educated, as the Egyptian princesses were for that time, that she maintained her position of rank and influence throughout her life. She came to Solomon while he was young and aspiring. His aspirations were not alone for more material glory, nor for a larger kingdom, for the people already were millions, but for "an understanding heart to judge," the ability to "discern between good and evil." Browning has used the records of Solomon's rich garments of Tyrian dyes, made

from the sea-shell, and the dazzling covers upon his throne for two stanzas in his poem, "Popularity":

Enough to furnish Solomon
  Such hangings for his cedar-house,
That, when gold-robed he took the throne
  In that abyss of blue, the Spouse
Might swear his presence shone

Most like the centre-spike of gold
  Which burns deep in the bluebell's womb
What time, with ardors manifold,
  The bee goes singing to her groom,
Drunken and overbold.

Solomon was a drastic monarch, in spite of his wisdom and discretion; his divided kingdom, after his death, suffered from his deeds of cruelty, in spite of his prayer for "an understanding heart." One of his first deeds was to have his half-brother, Adonijah, the true heir to David's throne, killed. The excuse given was that Adonijah desired to marry the beautiful Abishag, the last, futile concubine of his father David. Bath-sheba had proffered the request to Solomon at the urgent desire of Adonijah; this showed the persuasive power accredited to Bath-sheba. Solomon, however, refused to consider such a marriage. His political sagacity

DEBORAH, A PROPHETESS
Drawing by Jennie Wylie

knew that such an alliance would strengthen the claims of Adonijah for the throne, for to marry his father's concubine might be regarded among royalty as a means of establishing a claim to the throne. So Adonijah must die. It has always been a question whether the Song of Songs was written to commemorate the love of the beautiful Shunammite maiden for her royal lover. Then Joab must be put out of the path of Solomon; it was one of the last commands of David to Solomon, to "remember" what Joab had done in enmity toward David and that he had caused the death of Abner. The admonition was framed in smooth words, but its intent was plain: "Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to Sheol in peace." It will be recalled that Joab was the nephew and captain of David, that he was the man chosen by the king to cause the death of Uriah, husband of Bath-sheba, that both David and Bath-sheba lived with the fear and suspicion of Joab ever before them. Joab's death, by order of Solomon, was a relief to Bath-sheba in her old age.

The tendencies to idolatry in the later life of Solomon, because of his efforts to please his "many wives" and to establish altars for the

worship of their "strange gods"—for Astarte of the Sidonians and Chemosh of the Moabites and Milcom of the Ammonites—brought about the revolt of the people and the rebukes of the prophets of Jehovah. To this idolatry his son Rehoboam added a refusal to listen to the advice of the older men and a determination to become even more severe in regard to taxes and burdens upon the people than his father had been. He listened to the young men and proclaimed their bold, merciless threats: "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." In these later days, it is interesting to record this revolt of the people from monarchical tyranny, the decree against the "house of David" by the ten tribes of Israel and the selection of Jeroboam as their king.

Jeroboam was an Ephraimite, the son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon. His mother's name is given as "Zeruah, a widow." Jeroboam was "a mighty man of valor"; Solomon had given him command of repairing "the breach in the city of David." While he was at work, Ahijah, the prophet, appeared to Jeroboam; he rent his garment into ten pieces and thus symbolized the

"ten tribes of Israel" over which Jeroboam should rule. When Solomon heard of this, he tried to kill Jeroboam and to appoint his son Rehoboam as king over all the tribes, but the people revolted, as we have seen. Then Jeroboam, with prophetic advice as his guide, failed to follow the true course; he instituted priests, "whosoever would, he consecrated him, that there might be priests of the high places"; and he made "molten images." He feared that unless he should establish altars for worship of Jehovah the people would return to Jerusalem and to Rehoboam and the tribes of Judah. This distrust brought down upon Jeroboam a punishment that sorely afflicted his wife and home.

There is no mention of the name of Jeroboam's wife, but he had a son, Abijah. This boy fell ill, and the king knew that *he* could not ask the help of the prophet Ahijah in bringing about the cure of his son, for a doom had already been pronounced upon "the house of Jeroboam" because of his unlawful sacrifices and priesthoods. So the king commanded his wife to disguise herself and take ten loaves and cakes and a cruse of honey and go to Shiloh to ask the prophet's help in saving the life of their child. She was not to reveal her identity to the

prophet, who was now "blind with age" and would not recognize her. "And Jehovah said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to inquire of thee concerning her son; for he is sick; thus and thus shalt thou say unto her; for it will be, when she cometh in, that she will feign herself to be another woman."

The reader's sympathy goes out to this obedient, afflicted wife of Jeroboam. Perhaps she had advised her husband in his political and religious ambitions that caused his downfall; perhaps she was wholly innocent. In any case, her story is a sad one. To this heart-sick mother were spoken the severe words of doom: "therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every man-child, him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel, and will utterly sweep away the house of Jeroboam, as a man sweepeth away dung, till it be all gone. . . . Arise thou therefore, get thee to thy house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die." This seems, to modern judgment, a cruel treatment of a heartbroken mother. Apparently the child was not very young, for the prophet says that "all Israel shall mourn for

him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam." Perchance, this "good thing" was his inheritance from his obedient mother. Brief but tense is the closing sentence of her story: "And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah; and as she came to the threshold of the house, the child died." This scene has been painted, with insight, by G. Grenville Manton.

Wives of Job and the Prophets

A single, expressive characterization tells all we know about the wife of Job. It comes early in the poetic drama of this "man who was perfect and upright" but who was tested, in his patience and faith in Jehovah, by rending disasters, losses of estate, children, friends and health. It was after the death of his sons and daughters, as well as his loss of cattle, it was after the loathsome, painful disease had come upon him, that his wife said unto him, "Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? renounce God, and die." If one visualizes this poem, this "Epic of the Inner Life," as Prof. Genung well calls it, one may understand the distress of

Job's faithful wife, who had shared his grief at earlier losses and now sees him, as "he sat among the ashes, in dire agony from the sole of his foot unto his crown." It is much easier for a woman to suffer pain than to watch another whom she loves in such distress. The words of despair are wrung from her heart. Job's answer is significant: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Such was the grim philosophy and unwavering faith of this dramatic hero, "greatest of all the children of the east."

The significance of the answer, however, is in the implied compliment to Job's wife, that she did not, generally, speak as "one of the foolish women" spoke. She had been a true helpmeet in the days of prosperity; she must not fail in adversity; she must keep faith with God. If one follows, in imagination, the sequel of this poetic story, it is gratifying to believe that Job's wife lived to enjoy, with him, the renewed flocks and herds of fourteen thousand sheep and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. We would like to imagine this faithful wife as the mother of his

seven sons and three daughters: "And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job."

Passing down, in memory, through successive generations one recalls the years of Hezekiah, "the good king of Judah," and his prophet-adviser, Isaiah; approximately the dates are from 725 to 696 B.C. The mother of Hezekiah was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. One queries if her influence was exerted in changing the tide of affairs in the kingdom of Judah. His father, Ahaz, became an idolater in his later life and was denounced, but Hezekiah, to the end of his reign of twenty-nine years, "did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that David his father had done." Hezekiah summoned the people to "keep the passover"; he abolished idolatry and tried to prepare the people to resist the menace of Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, who had "entered into Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, and thought to win them for himself." But the people of Judah, under command of the king and nobles, cut off the water-supply from the fountains and brooks and saved Jerusalem in spite of the taunts and threats of the Assyrians. "And

Hezekiah the king, and Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, prayed because of this, and cried to heaven." Their prayers were answered; Sennacherib and his warriors were slain—a miraculous event as told in Scriptural narrative—and Jerusalem was saved: familiar are the lines of description by Byron:

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

Isaiah, this friend of Hezekiah and of his son, Manasseh, was a man of the city. Josephus calls him "by the confession of all a divine and wonderful man in speaking the truth." He was well educated, as is evident from the fact that he "wrote down" his words; and his words have been ranked as among the finest in world literature. He was prosperous and knew intimately the manners and modes of life of those of high rank, as he shows in his denunciations of drunkenness, vanity, and extravagance. In symbolism, he clothed himself in sackcloth and poor garments, like a captive, as he taught the people of the need of uprightness if they would escape captivity by the Assyrians. He was an astute adviser of Hezekiah when the

king might have sold the freedom of Judah to the Assyrian. There was a rabbinical tradition that Isaiah was cousin of King Uzziah, in the last year of whose reign the "call" came to the prophet to leave his home of plenty and ease and to go forth to warn the people. There is biblical suggestion that his wife was a "prophetess" in her own individuality as well as "wife of the prophet." From implication one assumes that she had made a happy home for Isaiah in Jerusalem; they had two sons, at least. He named one of his sons, Shear-jashub, meaning, "A remnant shall return," from the Captivity, which he foresaw and foretold. The second son bore a yet longer, more significant name, "Maher-shalal-hash-baz," meaning, "For before the boy shall know how to cry, My father, and, My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria." The capture of Samaria in 722 B.C. was the fulfilment of this prophecy.

Gomer, daughter of Diblaim and wife of Hosea, is one of the most despised women of the Bible; she was both foolish and wicked. Hosea and Amos were contemporaries of Isaiah, although they were older. Amos, the herdsman

of Tekoa, spoke his visions of what would befall both Israel and Judah "in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel." Hosea, a city man, extended his laments and appeals through the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, as well as Jeroboam in Israel. It is difficult always to separate the literal from the symbolic in the Book of Hosea. It is clear, however, that personal experiences of domestic tragedy formed the motive of many of his moods of despair, forgiveness, and renewed distress at the unfaithfulness of his wife as well as his people. When Hosea married Gomer, he dared to hope that she would make him a happy home, for he was an affectionate husband, with high ideals for his family. Her fidelity was brief, however, and she fled with her paramour, leaving her husband and children. She was placed on sale as a common slave, but Hosea bought her and brought her back to her home. Several times he tried to recover faith in her, but his patience was tested to the point of despair. Finally he adopted a paternal attitude toward his erring wife—wife no longer, but protected from further disasters. In his prophecy are revelations of the sharp

social distinctions in Israel, the low moral standards of both men and women, their idolatry, infidelity, and rebellion. Falsehood and thieving, adultery and drunkenness, scoffings and bribery —such are the sins of social life found in Israel, especially in cities. In the writings of this subjective prophet there are passages of forceful denunciation, others of intense pathos, and, finally, sentences of rare beauty and undying love. Probably the various portions of the book cover a period from 748 to 734 B.C. As the earlier prophet Joel had foreseen the forgiveness and pity of Jehovah for the sins of the people, so Hosea, using his own domestic sorrows as a lesson, emphasizes the tender and pitiful attitude of Jehovah toward the weak, backsliding "children of Israel."

In a very brief paragraph in the prophecy of Ezekiel we read of the death of his wife, as a "sign" of the death of Judah. Ezekiel was a son of the priest, Buzi, and was carried away captive to Babylonia with King Jehoiachin in 597 B.C. He lived near the river Chebar and uttered and wrote his messages for more than twenty years. Many of the passages are real poems; within these are found some of the familiar and tender phrases that are generally

associated with later writings, as "Jehovah, the kind shepherd," "showers of blessing," "a new heart," and other indications of the gentle manliness of this prophet. Of the death of his wife he writes with deep, restrained sorrow and affection: "Also the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of Man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet thou shalt neither mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Sigh, but not aloud, make no mourning for the dead; bind thy headtire upon thee, and put thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men. So I spake unto the people in the morning; and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded."

The Wife of Naaman, the Syrian Captain

The wife of Naaman, the captain of Syria, whose leprosy was cured by Elisha, is not definitely outlined in the Bible. She was "waited upon" by the "little maid" who is the heroine of this interesting story. Apparently the wife did not report directly to her husband the words of hopeful suggestion that were spoken to her by her handmaid. The narrative says: "And

one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden that is of the land of Israel." What were the traits of this Syrian woman, wife of the commander-in-chief of the army, we must surmise. She had wealth and rank. Her pride must have suffered, even if she lacked deep affection for her husband, because of his loathsome illness. Acting upon this inference, John Drinkwater has given to Naaman's wife a cold, proud character, in his dramatic narrative, "The Maid of Naaman's Wife":[1]

Then one day when the fans moved, and she stood
Ministering with her perfumes at the couch,
Her mistress, with eyes that meant the thought was nothing
Said, "Is it not grievous that my lord goes thus?"
And the maid felt the colour at her throat
Flow round her neck and flood up to her temples,
But knowing, feared not, or put her fear aside,
And said, "Would God my lord were in Samaria,
To seek Elisha there, a prophet, lady,
Whom God hath taught to cure whom he will cure."

After Naaman has been told of the possible cure and has started upon his journey to Sa-

[1] "Preludes," by John Drinkwater, 1923. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

maria, the poet adds a few lines of character analysis:

And Naaman's wife saw how again might come
Her mastery among the women of Syria.
Yet was the little maid her hatred now,
Lest of her word should come this resurrection.

Jealousy would be a natural attribute in the nature of this arrogant Syrian woman. The final picture of her restored rank but unresponsive heart is graphic; it follows the return of Naaman:

And all the city rang upon his coming,
The king and his estate, people and priests,
And soldiers glad of their old captain again,
And matrons with their girls, and the rich merchants,
All shouted, Naaman, Naaman, through the streets.
And Naaman's wife stood at the king's right hand,
Her slave-borne canopy coloured and spangled,
While the great fans beat upon her pride again,
And Naaman in plumes and plate and mail
Again was master of the Syrian hosts.

Vashti and Zeresh in the Book of Esther

In addition to the patriotic heroine, Esther, who will be recalled in a later chapter, there are two wives of distinctive interest in the Esther story. Vashti, the deposed queen, beautiful wife of Ahasuerus in his palace at Shushan,

is a woman of challenging personality. The king had given a feast for seven days, using his gold cups adorned with precious stones. "Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to King Ahasuerus." When the king, inflamed with drink and passion, sent for her to come to his feast, that the nobles, so called, might gloat upon her beauty and her grace, Vashti showed her self-respect by refusal. Says Josephus: "But she, out of regard to the laws of the Persians, which forbid the wives to be seen by strangers, did not go to the King." This does not minimize her courage in refusing the king's command. When he sent eunuchs she persisted in her declination until the king was so irritated "that he brake up the entertainment."

Vashti was a woman of spirit and intelligence. She had won the love of the king, for he was deeply grieved after he had consented to have her deposed and punished for her disobedience. He could not sleep because of his remorse. He realized that Vashti had humiliated him in his proud boastfulness, and he questioned "the seven princes of Persia and Media" regarding the best course to pursue. Their advice, expressed by one of their number, Memucan, was

that she should be deposed and severely dealt with, because "this deed of the queen will come abroad unto all women, to make their husbands contemptible in their eyes, when it shall be reported." It is amusing to read these words of fear of Persian women, on the part of the men. The "princesses of Persia and Media" might "say the like unto all the king's princes," said the stern advisers. So the decree went forth, the unalterable "law of the Medes and the Persians." If the result proved what the princes hoped, then "all the wives will give to their husbands honor, both to great and small."

In contrast with Vashti, the queen of good judgment and independence, was Zeresh, the wife of Haman the Agagite, the chief lord in the court of Ahasuerus after the dethronement of Vashti and the choice of Esther. All made obeisance to him, for such was the decree of the king; his head was turned by flattery; the only person who failed to "bow down and worship him" was Mordecai the Jew, the uncle of Esther. The vanity of Haman caused his doom; his wife, Zeresh, hastened its coming. There are Zereshes in every land and century; they flatter their husband's self-conceit, and they lack insight and foresight. When Haman came

to his wife, with the complaints about Mordecai, he received, from her and his friends, not advice but more flattery. After listening to his boasts, they urged him to erect a gallows, fifty cubits high, on which Mordeaci should be hanged. So Zeresh sent Haman forth, with assurance of her belief in his vanity: "go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet."

Then the tide turned. With the irony of fate, upon the gallows prepared for Mordecai, Haman was brought to death. The king, in his wakeful hours, had been rereading the services done to him by Mordecai when there had been a plot against the king; Esther had interceded with courage and success for the lives of the Jews whom Haman would destroy, and she had brought about the condemnation of Haman. Again, he returned to Zeresh for help. He told her "every thing that had befallen him," but she was powerless to aid him; she could only grieve and lament. Her opportunity had come and gone when she fostered her husband's vanity and foolish ambition.

In his drama, "Esther," Racine gives a prominent place to Zeresh in the last two acts. She urges Haman to put aside his resentment against Esther and Mordecai to

List to the counsel of a wife who fears
Thy rashness. By the sacred bond between us,
Conceal, my lord, this wrath that blinds thy judgment;
Clear from thy brow that frown of discontent;
Reproaches and complaints no king can bear. . . .
Oft has an insult borne without resentment
Served as a stepping-stone to highest honors.

It may not be too irrelevant to recall, in connection with the stories of these two Persian women, an unbiblical incident recorded by Josephus, and found also in Esdras of the Apocrypha, of another Persian feast, when Darius entertained the rulers of Medes and the toparchs of India and Ethiopia and the armies of 127 provinces. They drank and slept, but the king, wakeful, commissioned four guards to make separate orations upon the subject: Which was the strongest—Wine, King, Woman, or Truth. To the winner he would give a purple robe. Zerubbabel, governor of the Jews under Darius, and now one of the king's body-guards, responded for woman. The information upon contemporaneous ideas of women's influence is most interesting: Said Zerubbabel: "Wine is strong, as is the King also, whom all men obey; but Women are superior to them in power, for

it was a woman that brought the King into the world; and for those that plant the vines and make the wines there are women who bear them, and bring them up: nor indeed is there anything which we do not receive from them; for these women weave garments for us, and our household affairs are by their means taken care of and preserved in safety; nor can we live separate from women. . . . We also leave father and mother and the earth that nourishes us, and frequently forget our dearest friends for the sake of women; nay, we are so hardy as to lay down our lives with [sic] them. . . . Do not we take pains and endure a great deal of trouble and that both by land and sea, and when we have procured somewhat as the fruit of our labours, do we not bring them to the women, as to our mistresses, and bestow them upon them. Nay, I once saw the king who is lord of so many people, smitten on the face by Apame, the daughter of Rabsases Themasius, his concubine, and his diadem taken away from him and put upon her own head, while he bore it patiently; and when she smiled, he smiled, and when she was angry, he was sad; and according to the change of her passions, he flattered his wife's and drew her to reconciliation

by the great humiliation of himself to her, if at any time he saw her displeased at him." In spite of such an eloquent—and anticlimacteric—defense of women, Truth was the winning element in this contest, because "all things else that have any strength are mortal and short-lived but truth is a thing that is immortal and eternal."

Susanna, the Chaste, Brave Wife of Joacim

In the Apocrypha are at least two women who are noteworthy in Jewish history or tradition, Judith of Bethulia and Susanna. The former will be discussed in the group of "Women in Patriotic Service." Susanna was the wife of Joacim of Babylon. She was very beautiful; her husband was rich and influential; she was chaste and courageous. It is a somewhat salacious tale in the first chapters of "The History of Susanna"—that of the two elders, or judges, who fell in love with this woman in her garden and threatened her with death unless she would yield to their lustful demands. According to the narrative, they discovered by chance their common desire for her, but they were in collusion in trying to force her at her bath. Susanna was pure in impulses, and she

was fearless in courage; "she was taught according to the law of Moses." When these two men, "appointed of the ancients of the people to be the judges," confronted her at her bath, in her garden, and gave her the choice of yielding or false accusation which might mean death, Susanna said, "I am straitened on every side; for if I do this thing, it is death unto me; and if I do it not, I cannot escape your hands. It is better for me to fall into your hands and not do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." She came to her trial with her parents and her children. False witnesses declared that she had been seen under a tree in her garden, consorting with a young man, while her maids were at a distance. Susanna affirmed her innocence and called upon God to bear her witness. Then Daniel, as a young man, came forward, declaring, "I am clear from the blood of this woman." He was permitted to examine the two witnesses separately; they disagreed regarding the kind of tree in question—one said it was "a mastick tree"; the other declared it was "a holm tree." Susanna was cleared of guilt and restored to her position of honor in the home and community. Notable paintings by Rubens and Rembrandt, Vandyke and Veronese and others have fa-

miliarized us with this story of "Susanna at the Bath," beautiful and chaste, and the gross and sensual judges and accusers who contrasted so sharply with her.

Mariamne, the Maccabean Wife of Herod

Approaching the Christian era we find our attention challenged by a group of women that are generally called Herodians. Linking the history of the Maccabees, that family of priestly lineage that freed the Jews from Syrian bondage about 166-161 B.C., with the coming of Jesus, is the tragic narrative of Herod the Great. Herod was an Idumean; he flattered Rome to strengthen his power over the Jews. He usurped the kingdom from the Hasmoneans and, to appease them, he married their niece, Mariamne. She was granddaughter of Hyrcanus, the high priest, and a Maccabean prince. She was born about 56 B.C.; so she was only fourteen when she was married to this cruel, low-minded man, but she seemed to love him. Her mother, Alexandra, who was keen in political affairs and much more popular with the people than was her husband, King Alexander, regarded this betrothal with conflicting emotions. Alexandra had no respect for Herod,

but she intended to use him for political ends. Herod had cast off his first wife, Doris, when he married Mariamne; with the help of two Roman legions he captured Jerusalem; then began his dastardly career of murdering all his opponents among the Hasmoneans, beginning with Aristobulus, the brother of Mariamne, whom he had made high priest at her request, and ending with his wife and her two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus. This last act so affected Augustus that it called forth from him the remark that "he would rather be one of Herod's swine than one of his sons."

It would be unjust to emphasize the cruelty and intrigue of Herod and to omit all mention of the public buildings that showed his civic ambition —the palaces, theaters, and amphitheaters, and finally, the restored or rebuilt Temple. He was proud of Mariamne's beauty; tradition says he sent to Mark Antony a picture of her that became an influence to draw away the Roman leader from the snares of Cleopatra. Mariamne was a true wife to Herod, so far as the historians record; she was the mother of five children in eleven years. At times she joined her mother, Alexandra, in intrigues to increase the favor of their family at the expense of Herod. Herod

became incensed and embittered; in a fit of rage he decided to have Mariamne put to death. No sooner was the deed done, however, than he was wild with grief and remorse. In her memory he built one of the three beautiful towers in the walls of Jerusalem. His lament for her has been put into verse by Byron:

And is she dead? And did they dare
Obey my frenzy's jealous raving?
My wrath but doomed my own despair:
The sword that smote her 's o'er me waving.

Stephen Phillips, in his drama, "Herod," has many effective passages, notably the indignation of the queen when she discovers that Herod has cruelly murdered her brother, Aristobulus:[1]

MARIAMNE.

I am come
From young Aristobulus that was murdered.

HEROD.

Murdered?

MARIAMNE.

Or taken as we take a dog
And strangled in that pool whose reeds I hear
Sighing within my ears until I die.
You like a tiger purred about me: oh!

[1] Used by permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

Your part it was to soothe and hush me while
He gasped beneath their hands—your hands—
O yes,
You were not near, 't was yours to kiss and lie—
But none the less your hands were round his throat,
O liar! . . .
You! You—a sudden thing sprung up in the night—
To dip your hands in our most ancient blood!
That he should perish by an Idumean!

HEROD.

I stand where I have climbed, and by your side
I could not leave him—'t was not for myself
I struck, but for the State—'t was for Judea!
And for the throne—*your* throne—*your* throne—

MARIAMNE.

O glib!
The assassin first, and now the orator!

Misfortunes followed rapidly for Herod, after the murder of Mariamne and her sons; finally, terrible disease and constant terror lest he should lose his kingdom of Judea brought him to the frenzied condition he had reached when Jesus was born. So he ordered the murder of all the male children, that he might not lose his crown to the mysterious "King" that was foretold and had been already found and honored.

The Wife of Pilate

Herod died in the years 4-3 B.C., a few months after the birth of Jesus. In 30 A.D., approximately at that date, Jesus was brought to trial before Pilate, who had been procurator of Judea for three or four years. Pilate's wife was a Roman, Claudia Procula, according to the Gospel of Nicodemus. Perhaps she was inclined to accept the teachings of Christ; perhaps she thought of the dream of Calpurnia the night before the murder of Cæsar. Whatever may have been the cause, she had a troublesome dream the night before Jesus was brought to trial. As her husband "was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." She was sensitive, sympathetic, apprehensive; she was anxious to save her husband from making a judgment fatal for himself and the condemned man. It would have been well for Pilate's reputation in history if he had listened to the advice of his wife. She was, doubtless, of a higher social rank than Pilate; she was allowed, by a special permit of Ti-

berius, to accompany Pilate to Palestine when he became procurator, says Papini. She, like the keener-minded Roman women of her day, was interested in various "cults" and new ideas of philosophy and religion. That she was so emphatic in calling Jesus "that righteous man" would indicate that she had listened to him, or heard much about him, and had decided that he was guiltless and honorable. Pilate, however, uses the same phrase when Jesus, clad by Herod in a white robe, as mockery for his kingship, is returned to him; he was anxious to have nothing to do with this righteous man," but he dared not face the multitude when, to his surprise, they clamored to have Barabbas, an infamous robber, released to them and Jesus crucified. So Pilate washed his hands and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." Claudia Procula was stronger in character than was her husband, if we may judge by the narrative; she was earnest, intuitive, and conscientious.

The Wives of Felix and Festus: Drusilla and Bernice

Agrippa I had two daughters who exerted some influence upon the political history of

their times through their marriages. Drusilla was the younger; when she was six years old she was betrothed to the son of Antiochus, king of Commagene, but he refused to be circumcised, so there was no marriage. At fourteen, she was married to Azizus, king of Emesa, who was circumcised reluctantly that he might gain this political connection. The marriage was unhappy. Then Felix, a freeman, became procurator of Palestine about 53 A.D. The beauty of Drusilla appealed to him, and he made overtures to her through Simon, a Cyprian magician. Felix was a Gentile, without rank, but Drusilla married him and was with him when Paul was on trial. Felix was the Roman governor who listened so sincerely to Paul's defense against the charge of insurrection and the exposition of "the Way." Felix delayed decision until Lysias, the chief captain, should appear, but he instructed that Paul should "have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him." Moreover, with Drusilla, who must have shared his interest, Felix called for Paul "and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus." The story relates that, when Paul "reasoned of righteousness and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and

answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me." We do not know Luke's authority for the next statement that Felix "hoped that money would be given him of Paul; wherefore also he sent for him the oftener and communed with him." Was Drusilla sincere in her interest in this apostle, or was she, also, sharing the hope of a bribe from Paul or his friends? One cannot tell, but it is significant that "graft" at that time was openly admitted. Felix, as governor, was succeeded by Festus at the end of two years, and the opportunity of Felix and Drusilla, "the more convenient season" to hear and accept the teaching of Paul was gone.

Bernice, or Berenice, as it is sometimes written, the elder sister of Drusilla, was more adventuresome and tainted in reputation. Both women were beautiful, although Josephus says that Drusilla "did indeed exceed all other women in beauty." There was sharp rivalry between the sisters and bitter jealousy on the part of Bernice, because of the social position of the wife of the Roman governor of Judea, held by her sister. Bernice's first husband was Herod, king of Chalcis, who died; he was also her uncle. For a time she remained a widow but was ac-

cused of immoral relations with her brother, Agrippa II. When the people were aroused, and cried out at Bernice in the street, "Shame! Shame!", she married Polemo II, King of Cicilia, in self-defense; he became a Jew in religion that he might marry her. She deserted him, however, and returned to her brother at Cæsarea. She was with him, and came into the council-room with him "with great pomp," when Paul was called before Agrippa as a prisoner. About 66 A.D., when Florus was procurator and was cruelly oppressing and killing many Jews, Bernice appeared as a suppliant at Jerusalem, sending a message to him to spare the Jews. She was, says Josephus, "performing a vow" which she had made because of some severe illness that had come upon her. Barefoot and with shaven head, she begged for mercy for her people, but she was repulsed. Her own life was in danger for a time until her brother appeared and made the famous oration in behalf of the Jews that has been recorded by Josephus.

When Bernice was already a woman of middle age but still beautiful, she had a tumultuous love-affair with the Emperor Titus at Rome.

Although she was much younger than he, she lived with him for many years, with intervals of separation, and she cherished the hope that he would marry her and make her empress. But if it was his own desire to do so, he was prevented by resentment of the Roman people against Bernice. Her "shady past" was intimated in certain references in Juvenal's "Satires." This chapter in her life-story has been used effectively by Racine in his familiar play, and its later adaptation by John Masefield. The intense emotionalism of Bernice is reflected in her farewell to Titus, before her banishment from Rome.

It was a dramatic career, this of Bernice, sister of Agrippa II. When she listened with her brother to Paul's virile defense, which was almost an accusation of the Jews, did she share in Agrippa's feeling, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"? Unsettled is the interpretation of this sentence, whether it be sincerity or satire, but Bernice was present and must have appreciated the eloquence of the apostle, for she was a woman of keen mind and ambition, in spite of her loose morality.

Sapphira, the Wife of Ananias

Many were the wives of apostolic days who shared the work and sufferings of the first missionaries; these will be considered as "Friends and Co-workers" in a later chapter. In contrast with them was Sapphira, the ill-fated wife of Ananias. She was the victim of divided allegiance, as truly as were the characters in John Galsworthy's play, "Loyalties."

Should she be loyal to her husband or to the church and apostles? The community of goods had been adopted, as a temporary measure, by the early Christians. She and her husband had promised to abide by this code. They failed first when they sold their land "and kept back part of the price." Whether it was greed or personal need that caused the deception, we are not told; the presumption is in favor of avarice. They were untrue to the brotherhood; then they told deliberate lies about the price. The immediate death which came upon each of them was interpreted as punishment. There are certain interesting implications about Sapphira which arouse discussion. Was she part-owner, with her husband, of the land? Was she "privy" to the false deal? She, apparently, made no

remonstrance. Could she have instigated the deception? She followed her husband, three hours after his report to the apostles, and she told a glib lie without hesitation. Was she a weak-willed woman, dominated by her husband's commands? She was the victim of mixed motives, like many men and women of to-day, who desire a reputation for generosity yet have a selfish ambition which is more compelling. The strange sequel of the story must have been a wholesome lesson to the young Christians of the value of integrity as a fundamental virtue.

Consideration for Widows

Among the Oriental peoples, widows have had a sad life, full of loneliness and dangers. In the periods of social betterment, the Hebrews showed a respect for womanhood far in advance of their neighbors and this was extended to the treatment of widows. The law provided for consideration and care by the state for widows, if the families lacked financial means. Said the Levitical law: "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, then thou shalt give it unto the Levite, to the so-

journer, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled." "Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow," was the exhortation of Isaiah. "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation," said the Psalmist. "Honor widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God," was Paul's message to Timothy.

There are a few recorded examples of the application of this consideration for widows. A notable instance is the appeal of "a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets" —who has been described by Josephus as the widow of Obadiah, Ahab's steward—to Elisha when she was tormented by her husband's creditors and was threatened with bondage for her two children. It is an interesting tale of the prophet's courteous words and practical, miraculous helpfulness to the distressed widow. The increase of that "vessel of oil" has passed down to history as a Providential aid for true-hearted women in distress. It is implied that

the woman had some good qualities of administration and thrift, for the prophet's final words to her were, "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy sons of the rest."

Jesus was, at all times, gentle with widowhood in his words and acts. One of the most beautiful and appealing passages in the New Testament is the story of the raising from the dead of the son of the widow of Nain. As Jesus approached the gate of the city of Capernaum the son was carried through for burial: his mother walked beside the bier weeping. Jesus "had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." With swift, quiet touch, He awakened the dormant spirit of the boy, who then arose. Note the last, expressive sentence. "And he gave him to his mother." It was not strange that "great fear," as well as rejoicing, came upon the people, as they saw this marvel of Omnipotence, performed without any display or lengthy words. This recalls the similar deed by Elijah for the poor widow at Zarephath.

The widow whose "two mites" appealed to Jesus as the epitome of true benevolence and sacrifice has been immortalized in literature. Jesus was sitting down "over against the treasury." He had been teaching his disciples

and the people of the hypocrisy of the "scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the marketplaces, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts; they that devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers." While he sat there, watching the "multitude cast money into the treasury," doubtless he saw many of them with "long robes" and false hearts and ostentation as they dropped in their large coins. Then came "a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing." Often, in life, one finds an unexpected relief from the insincerity and affectation of the "multitude"; one sees, as did Jesus, the simple act of true religion performed by an obscure person. It is a blessing when such an experience comes; it seems to restore the balance of perspective on life as a whole. So Jesus felt, as he called his disciples to share his appreciation of real self-sacrifice and service, and spoke the words that have become an inspiration through the ages: "Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury: for they did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Perhaps it seemed improvident to be so gener-

ous, but the words doubtless were hyperbolic, that the lesson might be the more impressive to his hearers. Richard Crashaw, in his "Divine Epigrams," has poetized "The Widow's Mites":

Two mites, two drops, yet all her house and land,
Fall from a steady heart, though trembling hand;
The other's wanton wealth flames high and brave,
The other cast away—she only gave.

CHAPTER IV

MOTHERS IN ISRAEL

THE familiar expression, "Mothers in Israel," was no mere phrase of pleasant sound in Hebrew history. It expresses the fundamental aspiration of every true home-maker of the Hebrew people; to "become a mother of men from the Lord" was the goal of family life. Childlessness might mean loss of respect in the clan. Rachel lamented to her husband, "Give me children, or else I die." In every period of history, the maternal instinct has been vital in the Jewish race. "Behold I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in Mount Zion," wrote Isaiah, with emphasis upon the family as the basis of their theocracy. The attitude of Jesus toward mothers and children is one of the finest, most significant traits of the Great Teacher.

To the Israelites a man was, primarily, a father and a husband, a householder and the

head of a family; secondarily, he was a citizen and a soldier. So a woman was, essentially, a mother and wife; incidentally, she might be a co-worker, or even a leader, on civic or religious occasions, as singer, dancer, musician with timbrel and cascanets and lyre, or as prophetess. In these days of diminishing families among Anglo-Saxon races, in this time of increasing indifference to a home with children, the Hebrews of Old Testament times and the Jews of later periods speak a message that cannot be ignored.

In no other racial history, covering such a long period as that of Palestine, do we find a more beautiful home atmosphere reflected than in many of these Bible stories. Mothers, no less than fathers, were treated with honor and gratitude:

> A wise son maketh a glad father;
> But a foolish man despiseth his mother.

Domestic harmony and consideration for parents declined during the later days of monarchical misrule and of pharisaical substitutes for genuine morality and religion. Jesus had reasons for his accusation; "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your

tradition? For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, he that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have profited by me is given to God; he shall not honor his father. And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

"This people honoreth me with their lips;
But their heart is far from me.
But in vain do they worship me;
Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."

The Mother's Part in the Education of Children

In modern education we often hear the plea, "Give us the child until he is seven years old, and we will not be anxious about his future." Such an attitude of mind dates from the days of Hebrew education. The upbringing of the child, in health, habits of mind, manners, morality, and religion, was shared by the father and mother in the home until the boy was six years of age, sometimes until he was seven. Then he was taken from the home, after the establishment of "schools of the prophets" and,

later, schools of the scribes and rabbis, to receive his training by some appointed priest or religious teacher. Up to six or seven years, the mother, assisted by the nurse, gave personal attention to the child's development.

There are several words in the Hebrew language which are used in the sense of "child." *Ben* for son and *bath* for daughter are general terms. The word usually translated "babes" is used when the child is old enough to ask for bread as well as milk. The *taph* is the young child clinging to its mother. An older child was called *almah* if a daughter, *elem* if a son. These and other discriminations are explained by Dr. Edersheim. *Naar* is the youth, shaking off maternal restraint; *bachur* is the young man, eligible as husband or warrior. The Jews, without studying the modern science of pedagogy, or even formal psychology, watched carefully the stages of juvenile development and applied sane rules for hygienic growth.

Although there was no regular instruction for a boy "in the schools of law and religion" until he was at least six years old, yet there were records of religious training which must have been begun at three, four, or five years. Paul recalled to Timothy that his instruction "at the knee"

of his mother and grandmother began while he was almost an infant: "from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." In the Hebrew home before the time of the Maccabees there were "sacred writings" that were searched for and destroyed by their enemies. There were the small parchment rolls for children, certainly in later times, giving the history of Creation, the Flood, and eight chapters of Leviticus.

The child's religious education began while he was carried in the arms of parent or nurse. As he was taken through the doorway of his tent, or house, he would be attracted, as all small children are, by bright colors. He would find upon the lintel of the door the Mesusah, or phylactery for the house. He would not understand the words of pledge, but he would recognize the bright metal or wooden case. He would see his father and mother touch this symbolic object with reverence, kissing the finger or placing it upon the sacred lintel. Such first impressions are lasting. As soon as the child could memorize, he would be taught pledges and prayers, verses from the "laws and the prophets," extracts from patriotic odes and psalms. The

"name verse," some scripture beginning or ending with the same letters as the child's name, would seem to be a personal pledge. Before the child was six years, the lessons of reverence, obedience, and truthfulness were inculcated, together with deep, abiding honor for parents. As the mothers gained education—even rudimentary education—they became able to teach the children to draw letters on a board as they memorized their verses. There were reed quills in later days, payprus imported from Egypt, with ink of "mixed colors."

Education is only partially mental or religious. It is, to a greater degree, imaginative and emotional. Hebrew mothers attended the Temple services and the synagogue; they took part in the triumphal processions and marriage festivals. They attended, with their husbands, funerals of men or women of rank.

They met, at eventide, at the wells or gates of the village and city, to hear some startling story of some Arabian sheik, or some Egyptian or Assyrian or Israelitish warrior; and they returned, as mothers do in every land, to tell these tales to the children who were left at home. Hebrew mothers knew folk-lore; Hebrew children were educated by an abundance of legends,

riddles, and parables, from the days of Moses to those of Jesus. The "children's hour" was as surely known to the Hebrews as it is to us; then myths, fables and fairy-tales, stories of prowess and romance, supplemented the religious verses or "birthday text." Then around camp-fire or hearth all would sing odes, chants and psalms.

Work and Play in the Home

The physical care of the child was supervised by his mother with far more than ordinary vigilance, because maternity was considered a blessing of God. That is a delightful side-light upon the story of Samuel: the mother's yearly visit to the little son, coming up to the Temple, always bringing him "a little robe" to wear over his linen ephod. One can visualize the hours of lonely yearning for the boy, yet of religious gladness, that Hannah passed at her work, fashioning and embroidering the robe; Hebrew women were deft with their fingers and tasteful in selecting the colors for embroidering the girdles and head-drapes.

Children played with their mothers and with other children. For the little ones, there were imitations of animals and birds and those grotesque figures of hunchbacks and deformed

people that have been found among the relics of Jewish playtime. There were toys of more universal types, like tops, pipes, and drums. Flute and *kinnor*—or eight-stringed lyre—were among household treasures. While Hebrew boys did not excel in athletic skill like the Greeks, they were adept with quoits, slings, bows and arrows, balls, and "running to a goal." Slings were their favorite toys and light weapons for many years. In that strange tale of the Outrage at Gibeah, in the battle against the Benjamites, it was recorded, "Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at a hair-breadth, and not miss."

The "mothers in Israel" varied in personalities and influence, as modern women vary. Not many were ideally noble and gifted like the mother of King Lemuel's oracle. The majority of them, however, were "diligent in service," looking to "the ways of the household" and never neglectful of "the stranger within the gates." Paul had in mind some types of Hebrew women of past history when he adjured older women to be "reverent in demeanour, not slanderous nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good." To the younger women

he urged, "to love their husbands, love their children, be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Paul must have had some surprises, in his conservative attitude toward women, when he came to know well, and to appreciate, the business ability and true religion of Lydia, seller of purple, and the missionary zeal of Priscilla, craftswoman and teacher.

Some of the mothers listed in the Bible were women of noble womanhood, helpful and inspiring; others were weak and wicked, true to life of yesterday and to-day. Athaliah, whose characterization is in the summary of her son's evil-doing, "for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly," was an example of the strong, wrong kind of motherhood. Herodias is a female monster; the Herodian women, in general, attest the truth of Kipling's line,

The female of the species is more deadly than the male.

But there were mothers of gentle breeding and maternal influence of the most elevating kind, leaving their stamps of nobility upon their children and the state.

Sarah and Hagar

There were four women of prominence in the patriarchal age, all notable mothers, Sarah (or Sarai), Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah. Sarai appears in the first act of her drama as a beautiful girl, whose name meant princess. Her parentage is not surely known; she is generally called the sister of Lot, sometimes the half-sister of Abraham. Perhaps this latter relationship has been stressed by some to excuse her husband for his lie to the Egyptian ruler who admired her lustfully. The lie was justified, as a means of saving the life of Abraham and the honor of Sarai. It is certain that this incident made a deep impression upon the husband and wife and that they must have told it to their son, for Isaac used the same subterfuge later regarding Rebekah; it is possible that the two stories are different versions of one folk-tale.

When Sarai and Abraham arrived at their new home in Canaan, with their flocks and herds and servants, after interruption caused by a famine and a journey to Egypt, their tents were

pitched, the wells were dug, and all made ready for a new family life. It is likely that Hagar had joined them in Egypt, perhaps attracted by Sarai's beauty, more likely given to Sarai by the Pharaoh in personal admiration and as a peace-offering for his earlier intentions toward her. Jehovah, or Yahweh, the tribal god of this clan that was emigrating from Chaldea, had promised to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation . . . I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth." Only one essential was lacking for a happy fulfilment: there was no child, no son or daughter, through whom this inheritance could come. Months, years elapse and Sarai mourns her sterility. Abraham and she are growing old. They are becoming rich in flocks and herds; they are establishing friendly relations with neighboring tribes; but they are childless. Finally, after consultation with her husband—the pioneer fathers and mothers seemed to consult each other freely—Sarai offers her maid, Hagar, as her substitute to become the mother of Abraham's child. It must be remembered that Hagar was Sarai's maid, that any children by her could be claimed by Sarai and Abraham, that Sarai had complete jurisdiction over Hagar to treat her as she

would. Sarai was typical of her day and of normal, not idealized, womanhood. It was a humiliation to her proud spirit to accept this motherhood by proxy. She was more venturesome, more courageous, than was Abraham; she was far more petulant and irascible. It was a tense condition that she had created in her home; it would naturally breed jealousy and discord.

Hagar's name means a fugitive, an emigrant. She was, doubtless, attractive and spirited. By this elevation from the position of a slave to that of a concubine she became a vaunting member of the household, no longer the submissive, adoring maid. She was no longer a chattel; she thought herself almost comparable to the childless Sarai in importance. When the latter complained to Abraham, overwrought by remorse, jealousy, and irritation, he was unruffled, assuring her that Hagar was her maid, to be disposed of as she would: "Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her that which is good in thine eyes." It must have seemed "good" to her to be severely drastic, for Hagar "fled from her face." She was probably on her way to her Egyptian home, in the wilderness of Shur, near the fountain or well in Arabia, when the occult

message came to her to return as a prospective mother and to "submit" herself to her mistress. Then Ishmael was born, a sturdy child, and the household had an interval of peace. Philip H. Calderon has pictured, with vividness, Hagar in the wilderness.

Another act opened, however, with the visit of the angel to the tent of Abraham and Sarai, where he received hospitality and imparted the startling information that Sarai, whose name was henceforth to be Sarah, would bear a son in her age, which was now past maturity. She "laughed," but she did not lose her faith in this amazing good fortune, after her many years of waiting and prayer. Exultant must have been the motherhood of Sarah, and exultant the joy of Abraham in this "child of promise." There was an element of anxiety, however, lurking in Sarah's jealous heart. Isaac was weak in body; Ishmael was vigorous and playful. Would it chance that her son might, after all, be supplanted by this child of her handmaid in the inheritance? Some interpret the word "mocking," in the passage, "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian . . . mocking," on the occasion of the feast of weaning, as "playing"; the earlier meaning would seem more plausible.

The fierce, maternal love of Sarah was aroused; she would protect her boy from taunts, or possible injury, at the hands of this slave-girl's child. There is a note of strong class-feeling in this Bible story. Abraham's domestic peace was assailed beyond repair. He must decide between two embittered women. As a loyal, loving husband, he could only send Hagar away, reluctantly, with supplies. She gained her freedom, for she could not be sold as a slave after being a concubine of a man like Abraham, according to the Jewish code; but she was lonely and distressed with fear of famine for herself and her boy. Hagar was no longer young and venturesome. Again, a message of encouragement came to her; Hagar passes out of the story with the promise of succor and a great people in Arabia, as the descendants of her son. Some ingenious writer has suggested that Keturah, the wife of Abraham's extreme old age, was Hagar returned; but this is mere folk-lore, as perhaps the entire passage may be.

There is another act in this religious drama. When Isaac was twenty-five years old, the "call" came to sacrifice him on the altar; it was in accord with many myths of sacrifice of children among the Arabians and Phenicians and,

later, among the Greeks. Jehovah showed his disapproval of such human sacrifices by furnishing the substitute animal; at the same time he tested the faith of both Abraham and Isaac. Isaac seems to have made no demur to the original plans. With a temperament like that of Sarah, the ordeal must have been fearful to her, although she was probably not present. There was a tradition that she never recovered health after this fright; she lived for a few years, however, for she died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven, only a short time before Rebekah came to comfort Isaac; Isaac was then forty years old. Mothers of all races can sympathize with the anguish of Sarah when this child, the only son that had been so long awaited, might be sacrificed for a "cause." She had been a woman of strong personality, alert, brave, and faithful, but autocratic. By tradition, Abraham was "skilled in celestial science"; in Egypt he was able to teach the people arithmetic and astronomy. Making allowances for such extravagant tributes, this first patriarchal hero of the Israelites was a man of good mind and firm faith; Sarah was a worthy companion and mother. With a tender appeal to his Hittite neighbors,

Abraham succeeded in purchasing the Cave of Machpelah for her burial.

The Strong Personality of Rebekah

"And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." In this pithy sentence is concentrated the affection of Isaac for Sarah and the great charm of his wife Rebekah. The story of Isaac and Rebekah is a romance with enough of bitterness and mistakes to make it thoroughly human. The first chapter is an idyl—the journey of Eliezer, the faithful steward of Abraham, at the latter's suggestion, to the former home of Abraham and Sarah, there to find a wife for Isaac. Seldom in art or literature does one find a lovelier picture of girlhood than the introduction of Rebekah, who fulfilled perfectly the aspirations of Eliezer, even to giving "drink to his camels." With her pitcher, she was waiting beside the well; she watched the approach of the train from a distance, and she must have been excited, as would be natural for a girl of her vivacious, alert temperament. Perhaps she was not wholly surprised nor long in doubt as to whose messenger it was. What more likely than that the fortunes of Abraham and his son,

their wealth and noble family, should be talked about in Rebekah's home? For she was the granddaughter of Abraham's brother Nahor. Her father, Bethuel, was dead, and she lived with her mother and her brother Laban. Kinship was desirable in those early marriages of clans.

Rebekah was agile and generous. "And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him to drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw, and drew for all his camels." It was no small task, physically, to draw enough water for ten thirsty camels, but Rebekah was strong and willing. It is a charming scene. She was courteous to the aged Eliezer. She was quick and responsive in hospitality. She "ran" and told her mother of the visitor and his gifts to her. Like any girl of her age, she must have been delighted with the jewelry that Eliezer had given to her, while they were yet at the well. In the report to his master he said, "And I put the ring upon her nose, and the bracelets upon her hands." If

the nose was substituted for the ring-finger in those days, as it is still in some Eastern countries, the maiden's delight was not lessened.

Then came the story of Isaac and the mission of Eliezer, told first to the mother and brother of Rebekah. The maiden, however, was included in the consultations, and she acted with characteristic decisiveness. Matthew Arnold has pictured her character at this point in his poem, "The Future":

> What girl
> Now reads in her bosom as clear
> As Rebekah read, when she sate
> At eve by the palm-shaded well?
> Who guards in her breast
> As deep, as pellucid a spring
> Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure.

When the question was asked her, after days of consultation, would she go with Eliezer, would she leave her mother and home to become the wife of Isaac, there was no hesitation: "And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." So, with her faithful nurse, Deborah, and her maidens, she journeyed back with Eliezer and his train, through the Valley of Beth-el and Esdraelon to his father's and mother's home,

where the mother was no longer. Isaac was waiting for her, meditating, as was his habit, "in the field at the eventide."

As a wife, Rebekah was winsome and loyal during the early years. She "comforted" Isaac in his loneliness; she provided for his welfare and administered the affairs of the household. She had practical wisdom. She kept his entire affection and loyalty. There is no mention of any "secondary wives" or concubines in this romance of married life. Isaac was a dreamer, a digger and cleanser of wells, a patient man, without great strength or initiative. He was physically the "son of the old age of his parents." He has always been honored by later Jews; in the memorials, placed in the Cave of Machpelah, the monument to Isaac was the largest of the six.

After many years of sterility, Rebekah became the mother of two sons at one birth. Seldom have two men been more sharply differentiated in story than were Esau and Jacob. Esau, who preceded his brother by a brief time in entering the world, was strong physically, dull mentally; he was peace-loving, content to be a herdsman. It was Jacob who inherited the alertness and beauty of Rebekah and her am-

bition, with a strain of poetic idealism from his father. Rebekah was jealous, not of another woman in the regard of Isaac but of favoritism toward Esau, while she "loved Jacob." Doubtless, Esau's quiet, unfretting care for his father appealed to Isaac, especially as blindness came upon him. But, says the narrator, Jehovah had told Rebekah, "the elder shall serve the younger."

It is possible to explain rather than to excuse the bold plan of Rebekah, seconded by Jacob, to secure the inheritance and blessing for the second rather than the elder son. It must be remembered that Esau had "sold his birthright for a mess of pottage," an act that would arouse all the disgust of Rebekah. She was right, as was Sarah, in believing that "the inheritance" should come through her favorite, responsive son rather than through his dullard brother. She was deceitful, even cruel, in her method of attaining this end and victimizing her husband. She repented quickly. "Upon me be thy curse, my son," was her cry to Jacob, when the fraud was revealed. She had engendered bitter hatred between the two brothers and must have lost, for a time at least, the confidence of her husband. She endured taunts and humiliation from the

wives of Esau, the heathen wives, of the Hittites; "and they were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah." Finally, that Jacob might not make a marriage of like mistake, she sent him away to her brother Laban, that he might escape the wrath of Esau and secure a wife from her own kin. She probably never saw her favorite son again; she died before he returned from his years of servitude for his two wives. Beautiful, alert, far-seeing, courageous, decisive, impulsive—such were the traits, essentially feminine, of Rebekah as maiden, wife, and mother. Her representations in art by Murillo, Guido Reni, Goodall, Poussin, W. L. Taylor, and other artists are among the treasures of painting.

Rachel the Lovely; Leah the Unloved

At each rereading of the story of Jacob and his two wives, my sympathy persists for Leah. She was the ill-favored, with a "cast in her eye," the unloved, the patient, child-bearing, faithful wife and mother. In moments of emotional distress she reflects the bane of polygamy, because she could not win the love of Jacob. Whatever may be the estimate of Jacob's character in his youth, "sleek and sly" in connivance

with his mother to deceive his blind father, cleverly dividing the flocks so that his share was larger, he atoned for his own evil practices by his patient endurance of the counter-deception of Laban. Deceived by the latter after seven years of work as herdsman, when he thought he was marrying the beautiful Rachel, the younger daughter, he found too late that he was the husband of Leah. Then he served for Rachel yet other seven years; "and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her," says the romantic narrator. Meantime, tragedy menaced this ancient "triangle" in domestic life. Rachel had no children, but she possessed her husband's love. Their meeting as told in the story, was a case "of love at first sight." She must have feared, with the anguish of a childless Jewess, lest she might not attain the "promised inheritance" for the son of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Rachel seemed placid. She endured the triumph of Leah as a mother as her sons multiplied, but her spirit was one of sadness rather than resentment. Only once did she seem to arouse the temper of Leah, when she begged for the mandrakes, "love-apples," which the son of Leah had gathered, hoping thereby to become pregnant, for Syrian

women used to wear these emblems upon their breasts. Then Leah spoke from an indignant, sorrowful heart; "Is it a small matter that thou hast taken away my husband? And wouldst thou take away my son's mandrakes also?"

Finally, after Leah had borne six sons, whose names express her loveless, faithful years as wife, Rachel's prayers were answered and Joseph was born. Later came Benjamin, and the mother, giving her life in childbirth at Ephrath, named him Ben-oni, "son of my sorrow"; Jacob changed the form to Benjamin, "son of the right hand." Her two sons were more beautiful than those of Leah and were deeply loved by Jacob. Rachel had an emotional strain of religion and of deep love of jewelry and household gods. Without any question of the honesty of her act, she had not hesitated to store away in her sack the ikons, and the armlets and ear-rings from Laban's house. Perhaps she thought the fourteen years of Jacob's service had earned these. Josephus gives an entertaining explanation of "why Rachel took the images of the gods, although Jacob had taught her to despise such worship of these gods." He says it was "that, in case they were pursued and taken by her father, she might have

recourse to these images, in order to obtain his pardon." Laban calls them "the paternal images which were worshiped by my forefathers."

Jochebed, the Wise Mother of Moses

The mother of Moses, Jochebed, deserves a high place among these "mothers in Israel." She is too often forgotten in praise of her daughter Miriam and her two sons; tribute to the sister of Moses will be recorded later. The father and mother of such remarkable children as were Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, in the midst of the soul-deadening bondage in Egypt, must have been far more than ordinary Jews. Years had passed since Joseph, son of Jacob and his beloved, beautiful Rachel, had survived his experiences of prison, had interpreted the monarch's dream, and had become the chief steward of Pharaoh's stores of grain during "the famine in the land." He had saved the lives of his father and brothers when they "came down into Egypt" to beg corn; he had disclosed himself to them and received the blessing of Jacob for his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Now there came a Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph." Years of severe hardship, "mak-

ing bricks without straw" for the great buildings of the Pharaohs, had been the fate of the Hebrews in bondage. They had increased, however, and threatened to surpass their rulers in numbers and possible power. So the decree of Pharaoh went forth to the midwives to kill every man-child among the serfs.

The father of Moses was Amram, of the tribe of Levi, evidently among the nobler families. According to tradition, the birth of his son had been foretold by the sacred scribes of Egypt. His mother, Jochebed, was inventive and daring. When she saw that her little son "was a child of promise," she hid him for three months—we know not where. Then she had to find another place, and so she devised an "ark of bulrushes, . . . daubed . . . with slime and with pitch," and put the child, within it, in the flags by the river's brink. Perhaps, like Mary, mother of Jesus, she had womanly intuitions that her child would become a world leader. The spot she selected was where the Egyptian princesses came to bathe. With great care she instructed her daughter Miriam in her share of caring for the safety of the child. Miriam was an apt pupil, but Jochebed was the teacher, drilling the girl in the right words to say, if a favorable

moment should come. Thither came Thermuthis, the daughter of Pharaoh, with her maidens just as in a fairy-tale. She had a mother heart and she sought a nurse for the child. Another tradition declares that several Egyptian women were tried as nurses without success, for Moses refused the breast, until his sister suggested a Hebrew woman. Then Moses was adopted by the princess and bred amid luxury and educational advantages. Another tradition cited by Josephus is that when Moses was about three years old his foster-mother brought him, in pride because of his "comeliness" and vigor, to her father. Pharaoh took him in his arms, and the child, acting upon prophetic insight, snatched off the diadem from the king's head, threw it upon the floor, and jumped down to trample upon it.

Before the influence of the Egyptian court could make too deep an impression, Moses was receiving a counter-influence through the Hebrew woman, his mother, who was acting as his nurse. She became not alone his life-giver but his teacher during three years, for such is the period before weaning according to the older Hebrew custom. She instilled lessons of reverence, obedience, and affection. Can one

doubt that as the years passed, Moses never forgot this faithful mother-nurse? We may be sure he visited her while he was being educated in the king's palace. From her he inherited loyalty to his race and his Jehovah. She had a dominant influence in his decision to leave the court: "he went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens." One laments that no further information is at hand regarding the later years of Jochebed.

Hannah, Mother of Samuel

Reviewing in memory the incidents of Hebrew history from the Exodus under Moses and the years of wandering, the final settlement in Canaan under Joshua and the established theocracy, with priests and the prophets as the revealers of the "will of Jehovah," one pauses at the name of Hannah, mother of Samuel, in the days of Eli, the high priest, who judged Israel for forty years. Artists have given to Hannah a face of spiritual beauty, notably in the painting by F. W. W. Topham. She lived at Ramathaim-zophim, in the hill-country of Ephraim. She was one of two wives of Elkanah, an Ephraimite of good family and wealth. The other wife was Peninnah, and she had children.

Hannah had no child, but, when her husband divided his possessions for yearly sacrifices, "he gave to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a double portion; for he loved Hannah." Few passages in literature are more tender, more expressive of true love, than his words of comfort to her when she wept because of her childlessness, as quoted.

With unfailing faith, Hannah went up to the Temple and told Eli, the high priest, of her craving to be relieved of her curse of sterility. There is a commentary upon the habits of women of that age in Eli's fear that she was "drunken," because of her lip-motions as she prayed and her evident emotion. She explained to him, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Jehovah." Then he promised her a child, saying, "Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him." Months passed, and her prayer was answered. Samuel came, a child of much beauty and promise. His name means, "Because I have asked him of Jehovah." The boy Samuel has become the symbol of childlike obedience and responsiveness to spiritual ser-

vice. As she had pledged him to enter the ministry, she gave him up as soon as he was weaned: "she took him with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of Jehovah in Shiloh." Sir Arthur Sullivan has expressed, in familiar hymnal music, the lines by James D. Burns that describe the "call" of Samuel:

Hushed was the evening hymn,
The temple courts were dark;
The lamp was burning dim
Before the sacred ark;
When suddenly a voice divine
Rang through the silence of the shrine.

The old man, meek and mild,
The priest of Israel slept;
His watch the temple child,
The little Levite, kept;
And what from Eli's sense was sealed
The Lord to Hannah's son revealed.

O give me Samuel's ear,—
The open ear, O Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of thy word,
Like him to answer at thy call,
And to obey thee first of all.

HANNAH, ELI AND THE INFANT SAMUEL

By F. W. W. Topham

There is a later picture of Hannah, the mother, at home, thinking daily of her little son, missing him sorely yet delighting in her sacrifice, and making for him "the little coat" to be taken up year after year, as she visits him. She was "blessed" with three sons and two daughters. Hannah represents motherhood at its zenith of spiritual joy and renunciation. Throughout the narrative one is impressed with the poetic speech of Hannah, far beyond that of the average woman of her times. It is shown in her conversation with Eli; it is more pronounced in Hannah's Song. Truth compels us to believe that most of this song belongs to a far later time than that of Hannah, yet parts of it express so perfectly her own exultant motherhood and gratitude that it is always associated with memories of her:

My heart exulteth in Jehovah;
My horn is exalted in Jehovah;
My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;
Because I rejoice in thy salvation. . . .
The bows of the mighty men are broken;
And they that stumbled are girded with strength. . . .
Yea, the barren hath borne seven;
And she that hath many children languisheth.

Two Mothers in the Judgment of Solomon

One of the most unique stories of the Bible is the Judgment of Solomon regarding the parentage of a certain child. Two women, both harlots, says the record, came to the wise king, in an agitated contest over a certain child. Both women had borne children; one had died and the other lived. Each claimed to be the mother of the living child; they became very angry: "And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king." So vivid is the strange scene that one may almost hear the wrangling women. Among all of Solomon's recorded acts, none was more daring and wise than his solution of this matter: "And the king said, Fetch me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her heart yearned over her son, and she said, Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. . . . Then the king

answered and said, Give her the living child . . . she is the mother thereof." In his decision, Solomon showed his intuitive knowledge of motherhood. Many artists have depicted this story but none better than Raphaël and Nicholas Poussin, among older painters, and William Dyce among later interpreters.

The Grim Tragedy of Rizpah

Before the days of Solomon, in the time of his father, David, occurred a tragic story of motherhood. Rizpah had been a concubine of Saul. After his death Abner was accused by his brother, Ishbosheth, of having taken Rizpah as a concubine, as a possible method of strengthening his claim to the kingship. A quarrel resulted with fierce words and rebellion. Rizpah was the daughter of Aiah, of the same tribe of Canaanites as Esau's wives had been. It is probable that she was attractive; she was surely brave. When the Philistines destroyed Saul's kingdom, and David was at Hebron, Rizpah went back to Mahanaim to be among the adherents of Saul's household. Then came a famine upon the land. The oracle declared that it was because of Jehovah's anger at the treatment which Saul had given to the Gibeonites.

The Gibeonites rejected money as satisfaction; they demanded "blood of the house of Saul" to appease them. So the five sons of Saul's daughter, probably Merab, the wife of Adriel, and the two sons of Rizpah by Saul were chosen for sacrifice. Rizpah's sons were named Armoni and Mephibosheth. Upon these five men the Gibeonites inflicted cruel vengeance; they left their bodies exposed upon the hillside where they had been hanged or crucified. To the Hebrews such neglectful and sacrilegious treatment of their dead was most distressing. Thither came Rizpah in sackcloth to defend the bodies from the beasts and the birds of prey. The tale relates that she sat upon a rock and watched beside the unburied dead, from the barley-harvest until the season of rain. When David was told of the mother's anguish and sacrifice, because of this sacrilege, he gave their bodies decent burial "in the land of Benjamin, in Zela, in the sepulchre of Kish, his father."

Turner chose this story for a typical painting; it has, also, been depicted, with vigor and pathos, by Briton Riviere. George Becker was most successful in his picture, "Rizpah Protecting the Bodies of Her Sons from Birds of Prey,"

which was exhibited in the Paris Salon, in 1875, and, later, at the exposition at Philadelphia. The sons are hanging against a wall; the figure of Rizpah is vigorous and gruesome, as she fights away a vulture in the foreground of the picture. Lord Leighton has painted the scene in dramatic manner. Bryant embodied the story in descriptive lines:

Hear what the desolate Rizpah said,
As on Gibeah's rocks she watched the dead. . . .
By a death of shame they all had died,
And were stretched on the bare rock side by side,
And Rizpah, once the loveliest of all
That bloomed and smiled in the court of Saul,
All wasted with watching and famine now,
And scorched with the sun her haggard brow,
Sat mournfully guarding their corpses there,
And murmured a strange and solemn air;
The low, heart-broken, and wailing strain
Of a mother that mourns her children slain.

I have made the crags my home, and spread
On their desert backs my sackcloth bed;
I have eaten the bitter herbs of the rocks,
And drunk the midnight dew in my locks;
I have wept till I could not weep, and the pain
Of the burning eyeballs went to my brain.
Seven blackened corpses before me lie,
In the blaze of the sun and the winds of the sky.

I have watched them through the burning day,
And driven the vulture and raven away:
And the cormorant wheeled in circles round,
Yet feared to alight on the guarded ground.
And when the shadows of twilight came,
I have seen the hyena's eyes of flame,
And heard at my side his stealthy tread,
But aye at my shout the savage fled:
And I threw the lighted brand to fright
The jackal and wolf that yelled in the night. . . .

The barley-harvest was nodding white,
When my children died on the rocky height,
And the reapers were singing on hill and plain,
When I came to my task of sorrow and pain.
But now the season of rain is nigh,
The sun is dim in the thickening sky,
And the clouds in sullen darkness rest
Where he hides his light at the doors of the west.
I hear the howl of the wind that brings
The long, drear storm on its heavy wings;
But the howling wind and the driving rain
Will beat on my houseless head in vain:
I shall stay from my murdered sons to scare
The beasts of the desert, and fowls of the air.

Legends and Facts About the Mother of Jesus and Her "Cousin," Elisabeth

Separated by hundreds of years from these mothers of the Old Testament are a few strongly portrayed types of motherhood in the

Christian era. Preëminent among them will ever stand Mary, mother of Jesus. Many are the legends and poetic fancies that cluster about her, but she still remains a human mother, intuitive, courageous, unselfish. In the Apocryphal Gospel of the Birth of Mary, which has been attributed to St. Mark, she is said to have been born in Nazareth, the daughter of Lady Anna and Joachim, both of the "house of David." Her parents were long childless and were taunted for this misfortune. In fact, they were so much persecuted that alms were refused to them when they were in need. Angels foretold Mary's birth. She was, says the same tradition, in Temple service, from the age of three to that of fourteen; she had performed a marvelous "religious dance" upon the steps of the altar. She was "loved by all the house of Israel" and was chosen to wear the purple veil. At fourteen she was espoused to Joseph, after an angel had appeared to him with a message and a dove transformed from Joseph's rod had alighted upon the head of Mary. Seven virgins were her companions.

Into the womanhood of Mary came the greatest joy and the deepest sorrow ever allotted to a woman. Did she compose her Magnificat?

Some authorities are inclined to doubt this; it may have been a composite of various older psalms of praise and thanksgiving which she had learned as a child; it may have been written, in part, by later narrators. Hannah's Song was doubtless familiar to her, but Mary's is more tender and ecstatic. There is beauty and lofty worship in the familiar lines:

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid:
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;
And holy is his name.
And his mercy is unto generations and generations
On them that fear him.

There are critics who question the details of the birth of Jesus. Two things are certain: that Joseph was a kind father to Jesus; that Jesus had a simple, religious home life in Nazareth, as has been described by W. M. Ramsey in "The Education of Christ." The earlier events of his birth—the visit of the Magi, the flight to Egypt—have become a part of revered tradition if not of the historicity of Jesus.

There are no recorded utterances of Mary, the mother, when the shepherds and wise men came to pay homage. She has not been photographed during the years of her son's boyhood when "Jesus advanced in grace and stature and in favor with God and man." Two occasions, at least, called forth sentences from her which have been directly quoted. On the occasion of his delay in the Temple, at twelve years, asking and answering questions of the learned doctors, she reproached him for the anxiety which, for three days, he had caused his parents: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing." The second time that her words were remembered was at the marriage at Cana when the supply of wine gave out and she said to Jesus, "They have no wine." Then, in spite of his recorded rebuke to her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come," she said to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Luke and John, who tell these incidents and others of a personal nature, doubtless received their information from Mary.

One expressive sentence tells her character during this boyhood period of Jesus: "She kept all these sayings in her heart." The old render-

ing, "pondered these sayings," is even more significant. While Jesus, evidently the eldest son, with brothers and sisters in the home at Nazareth, was "subject unto his parents," after the episode in the Temple, Mary was not forgetful of his difference from her other children; but she was a faithful mother to all her household. Joseph, who apparently died while Jesus was a youth or young man, was a carpenter. He taught his trade to Jesus as all Jewish fathers were accustomed to instruct their sons in some craft. We may believe that the little "carpenter's shop" was either a part of the house or close beside it. It was a simple home in which Mary lived, but it was a deeply religious one. She knew the Scriptures and the psalms, probably some of the prophecies, and she taught these faithfully to her children. She brought them up to attend the synagogue; when Jesus entered into a strange city, he went to the synagogue to pray, "as was his wont." While he may not have been financially able to attend the paid schools of the scribes, it is evident that some of the latter became interested in this boy, with his unusual mind and lofty spiritual understanding, and that they had allowed him to "dispute," or talk, with them about deeper problems

of their religion before he went up to the Temple for his consecration at twelve years. Those who explain that Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem for religious reasons, as well as to be levied or counted, at the time of the birth of Jesus, assume that Mary went also in spite of her condition, because of her intense religious zeal, although Joseph alone might have been their representative.

Into her home life Mary brought other elements than those of open religious teaching. She was, like all Jewish women, careful in the making of bread and preparing of other foods; she was dutiful in all household ways. Jesus uses in his parables many figures of speech that are drawn from his intimate knowledge of domestic customs in a small household—the grinding of corn, the kneading of cakes, heating the ovens, hiding the leaven, the weaving and spinning of flax and linen, the bottling of wine, the mending or patching of clothes, the hunting for a lost coin, the wish for a place to hide treasures "where neither moth nor rust can corrupt nor thieves break through or steal." Nazareth was on the caravan route, on the way chosen by many pilgrims, this "basin among the hills." Jesus and his family had many chances to offer

their simple hospitality to travelers and to learn facts about the world, outside their village, from these traders or pilgrims. Four other sons, probably brothers or half-brothers of Jesus, and two sisters or more shared this home. One may imagine that Mary had days full of domestic work and worry. It cannot be doubted, however, that she, like Mary of Bethany, "sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word," that of her it might be said, she also "hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

There was another influence from that Nazareth home that Mary shared. The love of nature, of the wheat as it grew and the flowers as they blossomed, of the sheep on the hillsides and the birds nesting in the trees. Such delights were reflected in the words of Jesus. From his mother, also, and the neighbors and guests, he would hear of stories like the prodigal son or the injustice of tax-gatherers and judges. The frequency of his allusions to the "poor widows" is considered by some writers as evidence that Mary was a widow, and in very humble circumstances, during the young manhood of Jesus. Perhaps after the other sons grew up and went away from home, and the daughters married at Nazareth, the home was broken up, and Mary

went to Bethany to live with her sister or other relatives. There is implied tribute to Mary in the universal chivalry of Jesus toward all women; he never spoke harshly of them; he never warned men against them, as did so many Pharisees of his day. He spoke strangely to (or of) his own mother on two occasions, if reports are correct, that of the marriage at Cana and, again, when some one told him, interrupting his teaching, "Thy mother and thy brothers are without and would speak to thee." As on the previous occasions—at the Temple, at Cana —so now he assured them that he had a wider mission than that to his family, that he was sent "about his Father's business," that he was a brother to mankind. It is noteworthy that Mary, his mother, showed no signs of being annoyed or angered by such replies. She told them to Luke and John afterward without any unpleasant comment, but rather with understanding of their real meaning and his true mission. Such was a fine, noble-minded mother.

It is evident that Mary accompanied Jesus occasionally on his visits away from Nazareth. Recall Longfellow's dramatic dialogue on "The Marriage in Cana"; from "Christus: A Mystery."

ARCHITRICLINUS.

Who is that youth, with the dark azure eyes,
And hair in color like unto the wine,
Parted upon his forehead and behind
Falling in flowing locks?

PARANYMPHUS.

The Nazarene
Who preacheth to the poor, in field and village
The coming of God's kingdom.

ARCHITRICLINUS.

And tell us, she with eyes of olive tint,
And skin as fair as wheat, and pale brown hair,
The woman at his side?

PARANYMPHUS.

His mother, Mary.

When Jesus returned to Nazareth and was rejected, perhaps his mother was there, suffering and yet holding fast her faith. When his brothers turned away from him, assuming that he was unbalanced mentally—and one can understand why they might think so before his real revelation—Mary remained faithful. How many of his miracles she witnessed, we do not know; it is not likely that she accompanied him upon many of his journeys when he was preaching. She was with him that last week at Jerusalem and stood not far away during that last

scene upon the cross. Every mother's heart can sympathize with her agony. Seeing her, Jesus thought of her comfort and spoke those historic words to her and John: "Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his home." There was a tradition that she went with John to Asia Minor, where she lived for eleven years after the death of Jesus, dying at the age of fifty-eight. In literature and art, Mary, as virgin or as mother, has been celebrated far more often than any other character in history. The Madonnas represent a wide range of religious and emotional imaginations; Rossetti's sonnet to "Mary's Girlhood" is humanly appealing. Mrs. Browning has put into verse the moments of Simeon's prophecy when Jesus was brought as an infant to the altar, and that of the Crucifixion:

> Mother full of lamentation,
> Near that cross she wept her passion,
> Whereon hung her child and Lord;
> Through her spirit, worn and wailing,
> Tortured by the stroke and failing,
> Passed and pierced the prophet's sword.

Elisabeth, mother of John the Baptist, was a beautiful character, often associated with the

memory of Mary, mother of Jesus. She was a relative of tried friendship, perhaps a cousin. When Mary told to "Luke, the good physician," the strange story of the Annunciation, she emphasized that in her hour of astonishment and perplexity she "went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth." To her she sang, for the first time, the Magnificat. Extracts of the poetic words of Elisabeth survive but not her own song. She was the wife of Zacharias and one "of the daughters of Aaron." "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Both "were well stricken in years." Zacharias was "dumb" after an angel had appeared to him, as to Abraham and Manoah, in older story. Zacharias was entering into the Temple to burn incense, as was his office as priest. Both husband and wife had prayed for many years for a child; now the angel cheered him: "thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor

strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God."

There is no exact record of the birthdays of either John the Baptist or Jesus; John was a few months the senior. Not until the fourth century was there special attention to the date of the birth of Jesus, by month or day, although the year 3-4 B.C. had been computed earlier. Julius, bishop of Rome, appointed December 25 as the fixed date, but it has been doubted by many students. However that may be, one cannot doubt that the birthdays of these spiritual leaders, John and Jesus, were carefully treasured in memory by the two mothers and recalled with deep feelings. There are legends about Elisabeth. One tells that she fled when she learned of Herod's decree to kill all male children. With John, a tiny infant, she fled to a rock for shelter. Here she prayed, "Mount of God, receive a mother and her child." The rock opened and closed again. She and little John were safely inside with a light, but Zacharias was murdered on the steps of the altar. An ineffaceable spot of blood marked the place, according to tradition.

The Mother of Zebedee's Children

The response to Jesus and his apostles, on the part of kind-hearted women, will be emphasized in the later study of "Friends and Co-Workers." One of these women belongs to this group of mothers—Salome, the mother of James and John, the "sons of Zebedee." She has been called the sister of Mary, mother of Jesus, but there is no evidence in proof. It is certain that Jesus was often a guest at her home and that she accompanied him and her two sons upon various occasions, and was present at the sepulcher. Their father was a fisherman; it was while they were with him, mending their nets in the boat, that Jesus called them. "And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him." Whether Zebedee died soon afterward, or whether he resented this desertion from their trade to follow an unproved "prophet" or strange preacher, it is not possible to know. He has no further part in the story. The mother, however, will stand for the mother of every age who is eager that her sons may have the greatest possible honors—in the language of the narrative, that they "may sit,

the one on the right hand, the other on the left,'' in the kingdom which she, in common with most of the people of her time who accepted Jesus, believed he had come to establish. It was a natural request for aspiring motherhood. Her sons had been among the first and most faithful in following Jesus. They evidently shared her belief and hope. She is not to be condemned too harshly for this lack of ''understanding'' of the mission of Jesus, nor for her eagerness that her two sons might share in his earthly honors.

Herodias, Wily and Cruel Mother

In contrast with such mothers with tender hearts and religious aspirations, was their contemporary, Herodias, faithless as wife, evil as mother, wily and malevolent as a political factor. Married to Herod, the tetrarch, was the daughter of Aretas, the king of the Petrean Arabians. Herodias, daughter of Aristobulus and granddaughter of Herod, the Great, meanwhile, was married to Philip, often called Philip Herod, at Rome. When Herod the tetrarch visited his half-brother Philip at Rome, he fell in love with Philip's wife, and the passion was reciprocated. Herod divorced his first wife that he might marry Herodias; she took the

same measures to rid herself of Philip. Not so easily did the king of the Petreans accept the insult to his daughter. He came with an army and defeated Herod. Josephus says that some of the Jews thought the destruction of Herod's army was due to God "as a punishment for what he did against John that was called the Baptist, for Herod slew him who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue." In the character of Herodias, from girlhood to later years, there were evidences of passionate ambition. She chafed as wife of Philip because Herod Antiper was his superior in position. As wife of Herod she complained because Agrippa exceeded Herod in power and pomp. She urged Herod to demand the same rank, for he was a king's son, saying, says Josephus, "But let us go to Rome, and let us spare no pains nor expenses, either of silver or gold, since they cannot be kept for any better use than for the obtaining of a kingdom."

Like Jezebel, Herodias had great beauty, keen mind, and many wiles. She had daring which surpassed that of her husband, who was weak in her hands. Their relations were not pleasing to the Jews, who regarded them as illicit. Already complaints had been made, before John the

Baptist added fuel to the flame of censure by his severe denunciation of their married relations. Herod was inclined, perhaps, to listen to the preacher, for he seemed to have a friendly attitude toward him at first. "Herod feared John . . . and kept him safe . . . and he heard him gladly." Herodias, on the other hand, cherished a vindictive spirit and vowed vengeance. She succeeded, on a small pretext, in having John Baptist arrested and imprisoned in the famous fortress at Machero. He might be released; and Herodias lived in fear of such a result and of its reactions upon her husband and herself from this fearless, righteous preacher.

Then came an opportunity to wreak her cruel revenge. It was at a birthday feast when wine flowed and passions burned. Her own daughter, Salome, by her first husband, Philip, was a beautiful young girl. She would arrange to have Salome dance before Herod and his courtiers, and possibly she might become a tool. Doubtless, Herodias had already determined what "boon" should be asked by her daughter if chance should favor her cruel will. It must be remembered that this was in her time, not in ours. One's sympathy goes out to Salome,

and yet there is no evidence that she objected to her part in the tragedy. She seemed to act swiftly and decisively when she had pleased the king to the desired point so that he said to her, "Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it." There is no record of any flinching on the part of Salome, as she made the terrible request, prompted by her mother, nor of hesitation in carrying the gory emblem "on a platter" to her inhuman parent. In a few paintings Salome has been treated with more kindness, especially in "The Reproval of Herod" by Giovanni Fattori, where she sits, as a beautiful young girl, with her harp falling into her lap, with an expression of horror on her face, at John Baptist's denunciation of her mother and Herod. In a recent historical romance bearing her name as title, by Burris Jenkins, she is imagined with sympathy and consideration, and as the victim of a tragic love for Stephen, the Christian martyr. Her own later life was one of tragedy; it was generally believed that she died by violence.

There is yet another chapter in the life-story of Herodias which should not be omitted, if justice is to be done. She had been a selfish wife and a debasing mother. There came a time,

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SALOME, DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS

By Henri Regnault

however, when Herod reaped the harvest of the political ambitions to which he had been urged by Herodias. According to Josephus and other authorities, Herod was banished to Spain by Caius. The Roman emperor, however, offered aid and money to Herodias, because she was the sister of Agrippa. Her reported reply, if sincere, shows a redeeming quality of loyalty as well as pride: "Thou indeed, O Emperor, actest after a magnificent manner, and as becomes thyself in what thou offerest me; but the kindness which I have for my husband hinders me from partaking of the favor of the gift; for it is not just that I, who have been a partner in his prosperity, should forsake him in his misfortunes." The additional comment by Josephus provokes a smile; "And thus did God punish Herodias for her envy of her brother, and Herod, also, for giving ear to the vain discourses of a woman."

A Group of Mothers of Apostolic Times

There remain a very few mothers to whom tribute has been paid by the apostles, especially the "elect lady" and the mother and grandmother of Timothy. The first, lacking more definite appellation, was the person to whom the

Second Epistle of John was written. She is greeted as "the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth." John reiterates that he rejoices in her children who have been found "walking in truth." That she was a hospitable woman, as well as a religious mother, is attested by the apostle's warning against "the deceiver and the antichrist," with false teaching; "receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works." Evidently this woman had much influence in her community. There have been many surmises as to her identity, but none are verified. To her the apostle wrote those oft-quoted words: "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." Greetings and love are sent to this mother also by "the children of her elect sister"; this has been surmised to be Mary, mother of Mark.

Even more definite than the picture of this "elect lady," who trained her children in Jewish laws and Christian love, was the influence of Lois and Eunice. Lois, the grandmother of Timothy," the beloved child" and companion

of Paul, was a devout Christian at Lystra. Her daughter, Eunice, was equally devout; she had married a Greek of influence who probably never accepted Christianity. The women probably had been converted by Paul on his first missionary journey. There was no synagogue at Lystra, it is generally stated. It was, however, in the home of Lois and Eunice that hospitality was extended to the missionaries and opportunity to preach their "new gospel." Here was the "unfeigned faith" which had educated Timothy "from a babe," which had made him "wise unto salvation." Here were taught the "sacred scriptures" as well as the Christian virtues of honor, brotherly love, and spiritual zeal "in the name of Jesus." To this mother and grandmother Paul felt and expressed his gratitude for the fine character developed in this home and exampled in his assistant, Timothy, as they traveled together in Macedonia and Greece, as he represented Paul at Ephesus and sustained the older apostle during those months of prison experience in Rome.

CHAPTER V

WOMEN IN PATRIOTIC AND RELIGIOUS SERVICE

ONE of the most informative agencies of modern times is exploration among the ruins and archives of ancient history and the consequent realization that much so-called "modern progress" is only imitation of earlier achievements, adapted to later conditions of living. Women in this third decade of the twentieth century are likely to assume that they are pioneers in important places of business and civic responsibility. They emphasize, and rightly, the "new freedom," the broader opportunities for service that have come with the extension of the franchise. In general increase of opportunities for women outside the home, this is true. We are likely to forget, however, that older records, on stone and parchment as well as in printed form, have immortalized the names of certain women who served well in patriotic crises. There were many whose "power behind the throne" equaled, and often surpassed, that of royalty.

Miriam, Leader of the Hebrew Women

Listed among women of influence for good or evil in the state, were a few Hebrews whose names are steadfast in world-history: Miriam and Deborah and Huldah, Jezebel and Athaliah, Esther and Judith, Lydia and Priscilla. Some of these women came forth for a special crisis and then returned to their homes and obscurity; others seem to have spent many years in public life, raising or lowering the morality of the people. In the first place, historically, is Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron. As a young girl, saving her brother from injury by her watchfulness and tact, she has already been considered. Had it not been for her quick mind, perfect self-control, and fidelity to her mother's instructions, the life of Moses might have been lost, or his part in history might have been wholly changed. There is implication of her attractive personality, her ability to inspire confidence, in the fact that Pharaoh's daughter, Thermuthis, listened to her suggestion of a Hebrew nurse and acted on it at once.

In the second scene of her life-story, Miriam is using her gift in music, her skill in song and

minstrelsy and dance, to lift the people emotionally, to inspire them morally, and to fill them with religious fervor. Miriam was fitted to be an adviser to Moses, to be his assistant as leader of the women. That is a graphic picture of the festival of song that followed the Exodus. It is believed that the so-called Song of Moses and Miriam was of later date in its final form, but parts of it were contemporaneous in feeling. Doubtless it was antiphonal. Moses led the men, with Aaron and the priests taking certain parts in the response, Miriam and the women singing their lines, and all joining in the final chorus:

I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Miriam was possessed of the quality that has been called "religiosity," a trait seen in many of the great Jewish leaders. She had, also, a deep sincerity, if we read the story aright. She was sometimes called "prophetess." Like Carlyle's "vates," she was prophet-poet.

It is necessary to emphasize the sincerity of Miriam, narrating the next act in her history. Moses, at some time in his career, had married a heathen wife, a Cushite, whose influence upon

him was feared and resented by both Aaron and Miriam. It seems likely that this marriage had followed the death of Zipporah, daughter of Jethro, or her return to her father's home in Midian; some scholars believe it was earlier in his life. Possibly, the alliance was for political reasons, although one does not think of Moses as stooping to such compromise with his religious principles. However that may be, his brother and sister resented the addition to their family. The Hebrew narrator is inclined to believe that Aaron and Miriam were jealous of the leadership of Moses: "And they said, Hath Jehovah indeed spoken only with Moses? hath he not also spoken also with us?" The dramatic story continues, after the rebellion of Aaron and Miriam. "And the cloud removed from over the tent; and, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow." Why did the punishment fall upon Miriam only, not upon Aaron, also? He had shared in the revolt and the plot to usurp power. It was Aaron who undertook to plead with Moses for the restoration of Miriam, acknowledging that they both had "done foolishly." The evidence of Miriam's disgrace was removed, at the intercession of Moses, after seven days. One must remember that this tale

was told, in form of religious lesson for the people, probably many years after the passing of all the actors. As we see it in retrospect, Miriam's conduct was foolish, but its motive may have been patriotic and unselfish.

There is another reference to Miriam which shows her influence upon the people, in spite of this reproof and discipline: "and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again." During the period of her recovery, they waited for her, apparently, without complaint, though in those days they generally seemed too willing to "murmur." It was the "irony of fate," or, more truly, the "will of Jehovah," that none of these three leaders should enter the "promised land." Miriam died at Kadesh, near the post where "there was no water for the congregation" until Moses was given power to bring forth "the waters of Meribah" from the rock. Tradition says that Aaron died the same year. This was near the place or well where Hagar had been comforted by the angel when she fled from "the face of Sarah." Miriam has always been honored among the Jews. According to Josephus she was the wife of Hur, one of the captains of

Moses' divisions of the people: when they went against the Amalekites, he said, "Moses not being able to sustain his hands (thus stretched out towards heaven) he had his brother, Aaron, and Hur, their sister Miriam's husband, to stand on each side of him." Again, he wrote of the death of Miriam: "Now it was that Miriam, the sister of Moses, came to her end, having completed her fortieth year, since she left Egypt on the fifth day of the lunar month Xanticus. Then they made a public funeral for her and she was buried upon a certain mountain and they mourned for her thirty days." She had coeval mention of tribute, with Moses, in Micah's review of Jehovah's goodness: "For I brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam."

There have been many beautiful interpretations of Miriam in art, music, and literature. William Hensel's "Miriam Leading Her Maidens in Triumph" is a fine picture; Schubert's "Song of Miriam," adapted by Novello, is listed among classic music. Thomas Moore paraphrased the Ode, attributed to her and to Moses, with rhythmic accents:

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's deep sea!
Jehovah has triumph'd—his people are free.
Sing—for the pride of the tyrant is broken,
His chariots, his horses, all splendid and brave,
How vain are their boasting! the Lord hath but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah hath triumph'd—his people are free.

Was the grandson of Miriam, Bezalel, the man so skilled in many kinds of artistic workmanship in constructing the tabernacle? "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, See I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship."

Deborah, the Judge and Military Leader

Years pass after the death of Miriam; Joshua succeeds Moses, and he, also, fulfils his faithful leadership in this theocracy. Then come troublous times that are often called "the days of

the judges." Frequently we read the biblical passage regarding this period. "Every man did what was right in his own eyes," and we observe the marks of "the anger of Jehovah." There were elements of idolatry and lawlessness. There was lapse of morale, and the several tribes became the prey of neighboring peoples who tormented the Israelites, molested their flocks and herds, cut off their supplies, even threatened captivity. At such times they sought "men of valor," men of physical and mental vigor, as their military protectors. Sometimes two or more tribes of the Israelites would be molested at the same time. Thus Ehud, the left-handed, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, became, in turn, saviors of the tribes from their neighbors, whose attitude varied from friendliness to enmity. Again, we read: "the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah . . . and Jehovah sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel."

There is an important sentence following the above quotation: "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el, in the hill-country of Ephraim; and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment." Here are more facts than we generally find in the records of the Women of the Bible. At the same time, biblical interpreters have found much difficulty in reconciling certain statements about her home and her tribe with the later story of her association with Barak. Her name signified "the bee." She was a woman of humble family, we may assume; else some mention of her ancestry or affiliations would have been included by the later narrators. She was the wife of a man of whom the name only is known, but nothing of his ancestry or social position. His name signified "torches or flames." Deborah was primarily a home-maker, attending to her domestic duties; secondly, she was a judge, or counselor, of the people in her tribe, sitting in judgment "under the palm-tree." Probably her earlier "cases" were those of domestic troubles or civic problems.

Then came a crisis in the affairs of the com-

munity. There was need of drastic action, of swift decision; Deborah was not lacking. The mild counselor became the military director. Sisera must be prevented from further incursions; he might, otherwise, take "their daughters" into captivity. Deborah felt the protective love of a mother for her children. We do not know whether she had children of her own, although it is probable that she had. We do know that, like many another woman of every age, she had the "mother heart" for all who were in need of her help. Determined that Sisera should be driven out, she turned to Barak. Probably he had been tested before in military service as a "mighty man of valor." Handel, in the oratorio, "Deborah," has paraphrased her prayer for guidance:

> Immortal Lord of Earth and Skies,
> Whose wonders all around us rise,
> Whose anger, when it awful glows,
> To swift perdition, dooms thy foes;
> O grant a leader to our host
> Whose name with honor we may boast;
> Whose conduct may our cause maintain,
> And break our proud oppressor's chain.

Barak was the son of Aboniam; his home was at Kedesh-naphtali. His name signified "light-

ning-flash." To him Deborah tells her need and his "call" to "Go and draw unto Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun. . . . And I will draw unto thee [said Jehovah], to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand."

At this point in the story occurs a remarkable incident—remarkable for any age, and especially for that of the time when it occurred. It is a tribute to the mental inspiration and leadership of Deborah; it may be a commentary, also, upon the weakened valor of the men of her times. "Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go." Prompt and assuring was her answer: "I will surely go with thee." It is probable that Deborah was willing not only to support Barak, and to go back with him to Kedesh, but to awaken the other tribes to their responsibility to come to the aid of her tribe of Issachar. The need was wide-spread; already conditions were dangerous for travelers and home-dwellers.

She exhorted and commanded the tribes, and they rallied to Barak, with ten thousand men.

The Song of Deborah, unquestionably one of the oldest portions of the Bible in time of composition, pictures vividly the battle-scene and gives an enrolment of the tribes of Israel that responded to the appeal:

Out of Ephraim came down they whose root is in Amalek:
After thee, Benjamin, among thy peoples;
Out of Machir came down governors,
And out of Zebulun they that handle the marshal's staff.
And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
As was Issachar, so was Barak;
Into the valley they rushed forth at his feet.
By the watercourses of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.
Why sattest thou among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks?
At the watercourses of Reuben
There were great searchings of heart.
Gilead abode beyond the Jordan:
And Dan, why did he remain in ships?
Asher sat still at the haven of the sea,
And abode by his creeks.
Zebulun was a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death,
And Naphtali upon the high places of the field.

Thus, with support from a majority of the tribes, and "deep searchings of heart" from

those that hesitated to join the battle-array, the fierce fray was begun:

The kings came and fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:
They took no gain of money.
From heaven fought the stars,
From their courses they fought against Sisera.
The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength.

Apparently, there was an eclipse of darkness and a terrific rain-storm, so that the enemy could not use their chariots. The horses were frightened.

Then did the horsehoofs stamp.
By reason of the prancings, the prancings of their strong ones.

Victory rested with the Israelites under Barak. It was an important battle because of its lasting effects upon the neighboring tribes. Charles Foster Kent says in his "History of the Hebrew People": "In northern Israelitish history it was the great war of independence."

When Deborah assured Barah that she would go with him and that Jehovah would give him success, she added a reservation lest he should

be too self-confident and proud; "notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine own honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, who had pitched his tent near Kedesh, was to accomplish the deed that would relieve the land of the curse of Sisera. Apparently Heber, who belonged to a tribe that was not on friendly terms with Jabin of the Canaanites, the same tribe as that of "Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses," was a worshiper of Jehovah. Was this so recognized by Sisera, as he fled from his chariot, after the defeat in battle, and rushed toward the tent of Heber and Jael?

To the modern reader the old tale is convincing by its very savagery of detail. With wily invitation, Jael persuaded her enemy, fleeing, to take shelter in their tent; she said, "fear not," and "she covered him with a rug." Such was scarcely in keeping with the law of hospitality of the Hebrews, but this was a time of war, not of peace. When Sisera asked for water, she gave him milk. She stood guard, at his request, outside the tent to deny his presence to any enemy who might search for him, and then he slept. With religious zeal and brutal method,

she killed him, driving the tent-pin, with her hammer, into his temples.

This deed by Jael was extolled by Deborah and the later prophets who wrote the Book of Judges, with hearty praise. One of the most graphic portions of the Song is the vision of Sisera's mother waiting for his return. It might well be possible that Deborah spoke those lines; they are feminine in spirit and phrasing, and they portray truthfully the manners of the times:

Through the window she looked forth, and cried,
The mother of Sisera cried through the lattice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil?
A damsel, two damsels to every man;
To Sisera a spoil of dyed garments,
A spoil of dyed garments embroidered,
Of dyed garments embroidered on both sides, on the necks of the spoil?

The Romantic Tragedy of Jephthah's Daughter

Again, in the same period of social anarchy when "every one did that which was right in his

own eyes'' and ''evil'' in those of Jehovah, the Israelites were sorely threatened by their neighbor-enemies, the Ammonites, who were encamped at Gilead. It is difficult to place this episode in history with definiteness; the order of narrative in the Bible cannot always be followed. Several of the tribes either had already had defenders or called upon them in later times of danger—Tola and Deborah and Barak of the tribe of Issachar, Jair, the Gileadite; Gideon of the tribe of Manasseh; Saul of the tribe of Benjamin; David of the tribe of Judah.

For eighteen years the Ammonites had ''vexed and oppressed'' the people of Gilead, their neighbors. Some ''mighty man of valor'' must be found to end this marauding and menace. Finally, in desperation, the leaders of the tribe turned to an outcast, Jephthah. He had been exiled socially from their community because his mother was a harlot. For several years he had been a freebooter, another Robin Hood, with a group of ''vain fellows,'' in the land of Tob. When his brothers who had cast him out, and others of the Gileadites, came to him with a plea that he return as their commander and stop the Ammonites from their bold forays, he did not yield too readily. His pride

and resentment spoke in a natural reply: "Did not ye hate me and drive me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?" With promises that he should become "head and chief" over the Israelites, the elders renewed their entreaties, and he consented. The other tribes rallied to his leadership. He sent an ultimatum to the Ammonites, demanding permission to pass through their land unmolested; but they refused. War was on, and Jephthah, with that strain of religious emotion which was found in many of the Hebrew leaders, went to the Mount of Gilead to pray for victory. Here he took his vow, a common one in that time among many peoples, that if he should win in battle, "whatsoever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall be Jehovah's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering."

This was a venturesome vow. There were chances that a slave might be the first to come forth from the house, or it might be a maiden in attendance upon his only daughter whom he loved so deeply. Apparently the daughter would be expected to come to greet her father in triumphal dance, but who could foresee that she

would be the first to issue from the house? With timbrels and dances, with her maidens in joyful songs, she hastened forward. Then Jephthah "rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back."

What traits did this beautiful girl, this only child, show in the hour of tragic revelation of her fate? She knew the sanctity of a vow; her dominant thought seemed to be not for herself but for her father. With heroic courage, she gave the answer that has become classic in quotation: "My father, thou hast opened thy mouth unto Jehovah; do unto me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth. . . . Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months that I may depart and go down upon the mountains and bewail my virginity, I and my companions." The last clause in the sequel of this tragic prose drama has led certain interpreters to suggest that her fate was celibacy, not death: "And it came to pass at the end of two months, she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew not man." Such an interpretation may be more human, but it lacks au-

thority; it destroys the artistic intensity of the story, if it be regarded as literature. Byron and Stephen Phillips are two of the poets who have found inspiration in this character of the unnamed heroic maiden. Mr. Phillips has used a possible blighted romance in the life of the girl as a theme for a sympathetic appeal to her maidens as they waited, with her, for the approaching hour of her sacrifice. After laying stress upon her thought of her father and her need of courage, he gives her two fine lines:[1]

For being his daughter, I may falter not:
First of all things must he keep faith with heaven.

Then, with thoughts of the loneliness of her lover and her father, she says:

Sisters, two things alone I ask of you!

First, that a little if ye can, ye cheer
My father, either with the lyre or lute.
Then, in that hour when the slow-falling sun
Bring evening and the shadows o'er his heart,
Release his eyes of tears with music then:
Then he be pained, yet more he better so,
Than in a tearless patience to decline.

[1] "The Maiden in the Mountain," from "Panama and Other Poems," 1915. Permission of Dodd, Mead, New York.

Then him! ah, him with whom my troth I made,
If he should, at the last, more tranquil grown,
Ask one of you for wife, refuse him not!
Too dear I love him than to have him fare
Lonely and listless on through leafless life.
And now must I go downwards to the arms
Of my kind father. Be the blow but swift.

The Character and Service of Ruth

Whether the Book of Ruth be a political pamphlet, as suggested by some scholars in Hastings's Bible Dictionary, to overcome the narrow prejudices established by Ezra and Nehemiah, or a love-idyl as many interpret it, or a lesson of ideal obedience and faith, it is a beautiful legacy in literature. Its pastoral background, the scenes of harvest and customs of the times, the heroine's pledge of loyalty to her mother-in-law's home and God, are masterpieces of dramatic picture. It is a simple narrative of domestic faithfulness and romance; it is a memorial of a beautiful, pure, courageous woman. It is more than story or memorial, for in Ruth and her words are embodied the noblest traits of a Gentile—such as Ruth—a "heathen," as outsiders were then called by the Jews. Moreover, the events of the recital had marked

influence upon history, as it is recorded. In spite of the non-Jewish ancestry in his mother, the son of Ruth and Boaz was Obed; his son was Jesse; and the son of Jesse was the beloved King David.

In the character of Ruth were elements of self-sacrifice and fealty of unusual degree. It required courage to renounce home and kindred and religion, and to go with an impoverished mother-in-law into a strange land. Ruth was a woman with a fearless strain, even with a delight in adventure. She had a firm will as well as an obedient mind; she had gentle words but dignified persistence. Altogether she is one of the finest characters ever conceived or chronicled of womanhood. One recalls the sage remark of the Rev. Harry E. Fosdick in a recent sermon, speaking of the past and present, that as he reread the story of Ruth and thought about it, he realized how much we had improved upon Ruth's sickle as an agricultural implement; but, he asked, "Have we improved upon Ruth?"

Orpah was less venturesome, perhaps she was less heroic. Possibly she had other domestic claims upon her in the land of Moab that she could not leave behind, to go with Naomi and

Ruth to the old home in Bethlehem. Why should Orpah be despised for a natural decision? It has been said that Ruth, when urged by Naomi to go to Boaz and seek the shelter of his couch as pledge of his kinship and its obligations, would not think it fitting to refuse obedience to her mother-in-law. Naomi urged, with the emphasis of a command, that both her daughters-in-law should remain in Moab. Orpah obeyed the will of her mother-in-law; Ruth, fortunately, did not yield. It is probable that Naomi, after Ruth had returned with her to Bethlehem, with that ambition for inheritance which characterized the Hebrews, recalled her "rich kinsman," or Boaz, who was of more distant kinship, as a possible husband for Ruth. It does not minimize the idyllic quality of Ruth as gleaner, graceful and attractive in the fields, winning the attention of the rich owner and the friendliness of the other reapers, to believe that she and Naomi were united in an innocent "plot" to awaken the matrimonial interest of a prosperous householder. Naomi had "a parcel of land" for Ruth's dowry.

Stress is laid upon the modesty of Ruth and her unblemished reputation for kindness and discretion; said Boaz: "Blessed be thou of

Jehovah, my daughter: thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou sayest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a worthy woman." So, after the refusal of the nearest of kin to marry her and "take up the inheritance," Boaz fulfilled the obligation with joyfulness. It is interesting to note that Josephus adds a second custom to the one mentioned in the Bible, of losing and giving the shoe as a symbol of his default to "continue the inheritance," namely, "spit in his face according to the law." The narrator of the Book of Ruth omitted this less romantic touch, perhaps because the kinsman was already married, but "the law" included both; as we read in Deuteronomy, of the man that would not "take his brother's wife to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel": "Then shall his brother's wife come unto him, in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face; and she shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto the man that doth not built up his brother's house."

It is more delightful to enjoy the character

and story of Ruth than it is to analyze either. She seems more real than many other Bible women, partly because of the simplicity and the universality of her womanhood, partly because of our familiarity with the story in many forms, in biblical and secular poems, in art from Murillo and Vandyke to Philip Calderon, Brück-Lajos and W. L. Taylor, in oratorio and cantata from Gounod to Astor Broad. There is a ring of vibrant feeling that is never lacking when we read or listen to Ruth's pledge to Naomi: "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

In admiration of the character of Ruth, with her spontaneity and youthful charm, it is possible to forget the fine traits of Naomi as mother-in-law and as grandmother. How faithful she had been to her husband, Elimelech, and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, is suggested in the first part of the story. They had been loyal members of the tribe of Ephraim, but a famine had driven them all forth from Bethlehem-judah to the land of Moab. Without demur, Naomi had established her home there. Her sons had

married, and she had endeared herself to their two wives. There was genuine affection between this woman and her daughters-in-law, but it was unselfish on the part of Naomi. Bereft of her husband and two sons, so that her name should be called Mara, or "bitter," as she told her old neighbors in Bethlehem, she was eager that the young widows should not be lonely with her. She urged them to return, each to her mother's house; she wished for them "rest, each of you in the house of her husband." Arrived in Bethlehem, she was practical in her advice to Ruth and her oversight for the young widow's welfare: with far-sightedness and genuine love she said, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" It was a happy consummation of family life, of joyful inheritance, when the women who had been urged to call her Mara could say to her, as she took the child of Boaz and Ruth and "laid it in her bosom," "Blessed be Jehovah, who hath not left thee this day without a near kinsman; and let his name be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him."

RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ
By Louis Bruck-Lajos

Two Unnamed "Wise Women"

Two unnamed "wise women" had parts to play in political affairs in certain crises. Both receive mention in Second Samuel. They are called "the wise woman of Tekoa" and "the wise woman of Abel." The former was selected by Joab to plead the cause of Absalom with David his father, after Absalom had taken vengeance upon his brother Amnon, who had ravished their sister Tamar. Josephus calls her "an ordinary woman that was stricken in age." The biblical story is that Joab instructed her to disguise herself as a mourner, "as a woman that hath a long time mourned for the dead." Thus gaining audience with the king, she was to speak to him as the mother of two sons who had striven, and one was killed. She flattered David at once: as "an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad." Finally, she told her true mission—for his interest was awakened—her plea that he would allow his son Absalom, now an outcast for three years, to return to his home. The "wise woman" prevailed, so that Absalom returned to his home in Jerusalem. His father, however, had made a

vow "not to see his face"; he carried out his unwise determination, in spite of his deep love for Absalom and his tender grief at the son's sad death a little later when Absalom, after his revolt against his father, was killed by Joab. David's lament for this beautiful, reckless son has become one of the most familiar sentences in the Bible: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

A second "wise woman," also unnamed, has been generally called the "wise woman of Abel" because she saved that city from destruction by Joab at the time of the revolt, or rebellion, of Sheba the Benjamite. Josephus tells us in his customary tone of assurance that "she was a woman of small account, and yet both wise and intelligent." Sheba was "a base fellow." Blowing the trumpets, he called out to his followers, "We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel." In retaliation for this rebellious threat, David sent "men of Judah," under command of Joab, to pursue and punish Sheba. Sheba took refuge in the city of Abel of Beth-maacah. Joab's men cast up a mound against the city and were about to batter

down the wall. "Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee." Joab came to the gate, and the woman spoke to him, recalling how "they were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter." Then she continued, "I am of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of Jehovah?"

Joab answered in kindly words: "Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. The matter is not so: but a man of the hill-country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David; deliver him only, and I will depart from the city." With intrepid courage, true to the times, the woman promised, "Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it out to Joab. And he blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king." Like Jael and Judith, another unnamed woman

flinched not from breaking the skull of the evil judge, Abimelech, for the good of the people.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

The visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon is told in a few verses in First Kings. This Bible narrative has been expanded, in art and tradition, into a vivid, significant picture. Recent scholars, like Charles Foster Kent, believe that this royal visitor came to make political alliance with Solomon, such as he had already made with the queen of Egypt. He was the wealthiest and most powerful monarch of the times; Sheba or Sabea, in Arabia Felix, would be greatly strengthened by such an alliance. She has been called Balkis, Maqueda, Nicaule, and Queen of the South. Among Arabians there has been a legend that she had a son by Solomon who became one of their powerful sheiks. Josephus called her Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia, but later notes have corrected this double title. Her domain was noted for traffic in gold, frankincense, precious stones, and balsam. With her train of camels and servants, bearing rich gifts of such products, she came to Jerusalem to test for herself the tales of wealth and wisdom of Solomon.

What marked traits did she reveal? First, she had the spirit of adventure. Here was a long journey for a woman to take at that time; it was unusual for a queen to come to make overtures of alliance with a king. She showed pluck and initiative. Second, she had intellectual curiosity. She came "to prove him with hard questions." Perhaps these were the riddles of the East, so familiar in the story of Samson. Tradition has cited two of the "riddles" that she used to decoy the wise king. The first was to summon boys and girls, dressed just alike, into his presence and then ask him to distinguish the sexes. This he did readily by commanding that water be brought in basins. He noticed those that rolled their sleeves back, as girls would do, and those that failed to do so. Again, she brought real and artificial flowers to puzzle him; he summoned a swarm of bees and soon solved the riddle. Third, she had a craving for fellowship; she "communed with him of all that was in her heart." Perhaps some of her "hard questions" related to administration, and she received help from this king whose administration of affairs filled her with admiration.

There were other qualities of mind and heart

in this Arabian queen that belong to fine womanhood of every age. She was responsive without being envious. She had doubted somewhat the stories of this king's prosperity and wisdom, but when she saw his ivory palaces, his throne of gold and ivory and pillared hall of cedar, his vessels of gold, his chariot and riders with gold-dust on their hair, when she listened to his knowledge of trees and all science of stars and earth, when she heard extracts from his hundreds of poems and proverbs, "there was no more spirit in her." To her credit be it said that she had not only the appreciative mind but the expressive tongue. With grace and dignity she congratulated the king and his people: "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because Jehovah loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do justice and righteousness."

With graceful and generous exchange of courtesies, this visit was ended. She gave to Solomon "a hundred and twenty talents of gold [a talent equals $32,805 in United States money, according to biblical scholars], and of spices very great store, and precious stones; there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon." It has been asserted that the later use of spices and choice perfumes among the Jews dated from the first invoice brought by this queen. In turn, "king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty." It is likely that the first phrases indicate her "desire" for political fealty between the two countries. Then this queen, courageous, resourceful, appreciative, generous, "turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants."

Jezebel, the Strong Evil Queen

If often happens in history that as a nation lapses socially the men become weak and the women wicked. After the deaths of David and Solomon and the division of their prosperous kingdom into the separate kingdoms of Israel

and Judah, "evil days" befell both peoples. About 880-860 B.C. Ahab son of Omri was reigning over Israel while Asa was king of Judah. For twenty-two years Ahab ruled; his character has been summarized in two sentences in I Kings: "And Ahab the son of Omri did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him."

Certain inferences that are omitted in this narrative are supplied by other historians. The marriage with Jezebel was considered a great political alliance, because Ethbaal was the most famous king of Phenicia since the days of Hiram of Tyre. His daughter represented the culture and ambition of the nation; she was educated, able to write, keen and aspiring. She encouraged Ahab to build cities and palaces of ivory and to cultivate arts and beauty. It has been suggested that the celebration of this marriage was the occasion of one of the nuptial psalms. That Ahab built temples for her heathen gods, especially Astarte, was natural,

just as Solomon had built temples for his heathen wives. It has even been maintained that Ahab did not worship these heathen gods himself but was true to Jehovah, because of the names that he gave his children, Ahaziah and Jehoram. Certain it is that Jezebel carried on her idolatrous practices to excess. She had groves and temples for her gods; she entertained "four hundred prophets of Baal" at her table daily, according to the old narrative.

Even as she feasted these prophets and increased her wealth and power, so also she hated bitterly Elijah, the prophet of Israel. Ahab called him "thou troubler of Israel," but the king was afraid of the prophet and his denunciations. He was weak, however, before the vehement queen who had caused to be killed many prophets of Jehovah, although Elijah had hidden one hundred in a cave and fed them with bread and water. One queries how many prophets there were at this time in actual service or in the "schools." Elijah's life was in danger from Jezebel, and so he fled to the wilderness. He emerged, however, in time of drought, for Ahab was in need of Jehovah's aid. Then Elijah suggested that contest of the gods on Mount Carmel which is one of the few

amusing passages in Hebrew history. The fine irony of Elijah's mocking, as the worshipers of Baal called in vain upon their gods, is dramatic: "Cry aloud, for he is a god: either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." Then came the response from Jehovah, the rain, followed by what, as we see it to-day, was the bloodthirsty revenge of Elijah, who commanded that the four hundred prophets of Baal should be killed by the sword. This was a political necessity; it seems like a general slaughter. One must always make allowance for the possible hyperbole of later narrators. It was, in reality, no more severe than many episodes in later wars. It was not strange that when Ahab told the vindictive queen of this deed, she registered a vow to destroy Elijah.

Another incident shows the alert mind and strong will of Jezebel. It is the familiar story of Naboth's vineyard. Naboth had estates and a fine vineyard in Jezreel, close to the king's palace. In envy, Ahab desired the vineyard, and he offered to Naboth either another vineyard or "the worth of it in money." It is evident that Naboth had no respect for Jezebel, that he hated her origin and her heathen religion. The

king's wish was not law in his sight. With defiance Naboth said, "Jehovah forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." Ahab returned to his home, "heavy and displeased." He refused to eat; he lay down upon his bed and turned his face away in petulant anger. Then Jezebel took the helm, as she had done many times in this domestic "ship of state." With the decision of a later Lady Macbeth, she said to him, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard." So she "wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal," planning her method of vengeance upon Naboth. By false witnesses she charged him with cursing God and the king. She won her intrigue, and Naboth was stoned to death. Swift and sure were the plots of this relentless and resourceful woman queen. Her tragic fate was accounted as Jehovah's retribution for her crime against Naboth.

The death of Jezebel was as dramatic as her life had been. She must have been an old woman when news came to her of her pending doom. Jehu, king of Israel, had refused to make peace with her son Joram, saying, "What peace,

so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" It is justice to note that later prophets, writing this story, were merciless upon Jezebel's memory. There has been a question whether she was guilty of licentious practices other than such as may have crept into her heathen altars. When her fated day came, Jehu hastened toward Jezreel. She heard that he was on the way; with typical defiance she "painted her eyes [with antimony to make them lustrous], and attired her head, and looked out at the window." Then with challenge she called down to Jehu, as he entered the gate, "Is it peace, thou Zimri, thy master's murderer?" This was a taunt to the man who had slain both Joram, her son, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of Judah. As soon as Jehu recognized Jezebel, he commanded the eunuchs to throw her down from the window into the courtyard. The horses trampled her body, as Elijah had foretold. Jehu, however, because "she was a king's daughter," would have accorded her decent burial, but her body was too badly mangled; it was left for further fulfilment of the prophet's words, "the dogs shall eat Jezebel." It is a gruesome story, told with the vigor and intensity of the Hebrew historian

when he is recounting the fate of his enemies. The name of Jezebel has been associated with cruelty, revenge, and idolatry; one must add the qualities of keenness of intellect, strength of will, and high material ambitions. She must be judged by the standards of her own age. T. M. Rooke has used her life-incidents for two graphic pictures.

Athaliah, Regent and Traitor

What chance had Athaliah, child of weak Ahab and wicked Jezebel? Bred among the conditions of deceit and plotting, with idolatry ever before her, she was wilful, proud, and sinister in influence. Her character as it appeared to the Hebrew narrator was summarized in the sentences: "So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram . . . reigned . . . and his mother's name was Athaliah the daughter of Omri [or Ahab, son of Omri]. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly." The marriage of Athaliah, whose father had been king of Israel, to Jehoram of the kingdom of Judah was a political event of great importance. One reaction was to introduce heathen worship into the southern kingdom. Says Josephus of Jehoram: "And it was Ath-

aliah, the daughter of Ahab whom he had married who taught him to be a bad man in other respects, and also to worship foreign gods."

Little is recorded of Athaliah, except these general statements of her as wife and mother, until about 842 B.C., when she became acting queen for six years. To accomplish this ambition, she used her cruel power to its fullest extent. When she found that Ahaziah, her son, had been killed by Jehu, as related above, she determined that she would destroy "all the seed royal of the house of Judah" and become ruler. She was foiled, however, by the quick action of Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram and the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest. She took little Joash, her nephew, then an infant, and hid him, with his nurse "in the bedchamber." Later he was "brought up" in the Temple, "hid in the house of God six years." Meantime "Athaliah reigned over the land" with her strong will. She must have been a woman of mental acumen, as well as physical bravery, in addition to her dishonesty and usurpation.

During the six years while little Joash was growing in vigor trained by Jehoiada and his wife to know the "will of Jehovah" and to have noble ideals of kingship for Judah, the high-

priest was strengthening the army, arousing all "the captains of hundreds," the "Levites out of the cities of Judah," and "the heads of fathers' houses of Israel." They came to Jerusalem and made a covenant to serve the young Joash as their king. He gave to them the spears and bucklers and shields that had been King David's that were still "in the house of God." He enrolled some of them as porters, at thresholds; others at the king's house and the gate. All were ready for the assembly, with their arms about them. Athaliah had her own army in order, also, for she had noticed some unrest. "Then they brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony, and made him king: and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him; and they said, Long live the king."

At this dramatic moment, Athaliah, hearing the shouts of the people, came out toward the "house of Jehovah." With amazement and anger, she beheld this little king standing by the pillar at the entrance, "and the captains and the trumpets by the king." There were loud blasts from the trumpets, loud psalms from the singers and players of instruments. Then Athaliah, the proud, vengeful queen, was trapped

but still defiant. She "rent her clothes, and said, Treason! treason!" With characteristic severity, Jehoiada pronounced her doom. To the captain he said: "Have her forth between the ranks; and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword: for the priest said, Slay her not in the house of Jehovah. So they made way for her; and she went to the entrance of the horse gate to the king's house: and they slew her there." Another chapter completes this dramatic story of Athaliah. The people hastened to the "house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. . . . So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet. And Athaliah they had slain with the sword."

One of the finest compositions by Mendelssohn is his "Atalie," with "The War March of the Priests." Racine found in this character a theme for vivid portrayal. He introduced into the play the high priest, "Mattan, the priest of Baal, Abner, chief of the king's officers, and other effective participants in the tragic, yet inspiring, scene of Athaliah's downfall. He gives a wistful touch of imagination to the lines where she first sees Joash:

And straight her tongue seems frozen in her mouth,
And all her boldness utterly abashed;
She could not move her eyes, in terror fix'd
And strange surprise on young Eliakim [Joash].

She says

The sweetness of his voice, his infant grace
Unconsciously made enmity give way
To—can it be compassion that I feel?

Huldah, the Prophetess

In the days of another "good king," Josiah, and Hilkiah, his priest, with an approximate date of 620 B.C., there was a prophetess named Huldah who performed noteworthy services for her king. The biblical account, given in both Second Kings and Second Chronicles, says that "she dwelt in the second quarter of Jerusalem." This was near the fishgate, "which lay on the north or northwest of the city." Near this was the "college" or "house of instruction." Huldah was the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. Josephus summarizes her social position in the words, "Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum (which Shallum was a man of dignity, and of an eminent family)."

Huldah must have witnessed many "evil

days'' in Jerusalem. She had suffered from the results of the reign of Manasseh, who had ''shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another,'' although he reformed before his death and restored the worship of Jehovah. After his death came Amon, his son, who continued the family habit of serving idols and doing ''that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah.'' Amon reigned only two years and was succeeded by Josiah, who broke away from idolatry and will go down in memory as the king in whose reign the Temple was repaired, the Book of the Law found, the altars to idols broken down, and the law of Jehovah interpreted and enforced. The mother of Josiah was Jedidah; his father died when he was eight years old. Much of the training of the boy-king must have devolved upon his mother. It is safe to assume that she was a woman of good mind and soul; she instructed her son in moral virtues and was largely responsible, we may believe, for his uprightness, so that he ''walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.'' The idealism is extravagant.

At twelve years, the king had ''brought the people to a sober way of living.'' He started re-

pairs upon the Temple, engaging workmen of various trades, carpenters and masons, and buying timber and hewn stone for the work. So devoted were these craftsmen that, we are told, "there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand; for they dealt faithfully." It sounds utopian! Josiah was eighteen when some startling information came to him from Hilkiah the priest: he was told that the scribe Shaphan had "found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah." When Josiah heard the words read from this long-lost book, he was fearful lest "the wrath of Jehovah might be kindled" against the children of Judah because they had failed to obey the words ordained for their right living and worship.

In his anxiety, he begged the high priest and the scribe and Asaiah, the king's servant, to "inquire of Jehovah" for him and the people regarding their future. They went to Huldah the prophetess—more truly, the interpreter and legislator—and they communed with her." Without hesitation she told these men that Jehovah had revealed to her his judgment upon the erring children of Judah. Because of their iniquity and idolatry for so many years they

must suffer "the wrath of Jehovah," "and it shall not be quenched." Rigid and cold seems the message but there was an alleviation for the king; it must have been a satisfaction to Huldah to send these words of appreciation of the humility and piety of Josiah: "because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before Jehovah, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith Jehovah. Therefore, behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil which I will bring upon this place." We have no information how long Huldah survived after this service for her king. It is to be hoped that she, also, was gathered to her grave in peace before the evil days returned. Probably she was a participant in the Passover that was revived and celebrated, greater than any other event of religious importance "from the days of the judges." She would rejoice in Josiah's abolishment of the idols and wizards and "all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem." Did she foresee the

approaching doom of the city and of the Temple in the next generation, the taxation of the land for Pharaoh of Egypt and the captivity and desolation that came with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the reigns of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, and of Zedekiah, "his father's brother"? Surely it is grim belief in the "jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children," that is reflected in these days of Huldah!

Esther, the Savior-Queen of the Jews

The life-story of Esther is familiar and compelling. After the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 538 B.C. and his permission to the Jews to return to Palestine, many of them, often called a "remnant," took advantage of the opportunity, but others preferred to stay in Shushan where was abundance of food and prosperity. Among the latter was Mordecai, a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, and his niece Esther, daughter of Abihail. Probably Esther was an orphan, for she lived with her uncle and was carefully educated by him. She was able to write, with Mordecai, the proclamation of Purim, according to biblical narrative. Her education included social graces and religious training in the laws

and ceremonies of the Jews. She was very beautiful. It is possible that her shrewd uncle cherished hopes that she might have a "call" to the court of Ahasuerus, where she could gain social recognition for her race. He could not foresee that she would become the savior of their people after Haman, with the ring of the king as symbol of his power, had had an edict issued against this race whom he despised on the ground that their "laws were diverse from those of every other people" and that they failed to keep the laws of the Persians. When Vashti had been deposed and the countryside was searched for a beautiful maiden to arouse Ahasuerus from his repentance for his act toward his queen, the choice fell upon Esther. Mordecai counseled her not to tell the king, or any one, of her nationality. She became the favorite of the harem, with the king; "And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what would become of her." She was made "the lawful wife"; she was anointed by four hundred virgins to be purified, and the king kept a wedding feast for her for a month, says Josephus. Gifts were sent broadcast, and all the people

were delighted, for "Esther obtained favor of all the people that looked upon her."

Then, with the fickleness of Eastern monarchs, the king found other favorites, and Esther was not called to court for a long time. Meantime, the crisis arose for her uncle and her race; word was brought to Esther by one of the king's chamberlains. The only hope was through the intercession of Esther with the king. It was a rash act to enter the king's presence unsummoned. It might mean death. Mordecai urged her, saying, "who knoweth thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Putting fear behind her, asking for prayer on the part of her people, she adorned herself and started on her perilous venture with the words, "and if I perish, I perish." Josephus has adorned this tale with imaginative touches and adaptations from the Apocryphal Esther: "And as soon as she come over against the king, as he was sitting on his throne, in his royal apparel, which was a garment interwoven with gold and precious stones which made him seem more terrible to her especially when he looked at her somewhat severely, and with a countenance on fire with anger, her joints failed

her immediately, out of the dread she was in, and she fell down sideways in a swoon; but the king changed his mind, which happened, as I suppose, by the will of God, and was concerned for his wife lest her fear should bring some very ill turn upon her, and he leaped from his throne, and took her in his arms and recovered her, by embracing her and speaking comfortably to her and exhorting her to be of good cheer and not to suspect anything sad on account of her coming to him without being called, because that law was made for subjects but that she who was a Queen, as he was a King, might be intirely secure. Then he put the scepter into her hand, and laid his rod upon her neck, and so freed her from fear." Esther's answer, as conceived by the historian, follows: "My Lord, it is not easy for me to say on the sudden what hath happened, for as soon as I saw thee to be great and comely and terrible, my spirit departed from me, and I had no soul left in me."

The biblical narrative of the queen's request, her banquets, her adroit accusation of Haman and salvation of her people, the elevation of Mordecai to be chief in command under the king, and the slaying of hundreds of men who had been enemies of the Jews reaches its crisis

in the request of Esther that the ten sons of Haman should be hung. Then came the establishment of the Feast of Purim, or lot, in memory of what Esther had done to rescue the Jews from destruction. It is a colorful, pictorial story, true to the times and customs. Well may the Jews, even to the present day, celebrate this feast in honor of their savior-queen. It combines, as literature, the dramatic and romantic; it is an unwaning inspiration to artists and poets. Among many beautiful paintings of Esther may be cited those by Ernest Normand, Felix Barrias and W. L. Taylor.

Judith, the Patriot of Bethulia

In the rabbinical canons the Book of Esther, with her later history, is among the Apocryphal books with the Maccabees, Tobit, and Judith. Judith has been one of the most idealized women in Hebrew history or tradition. Nebuchadnezzar had made successful war against the Medes. Some of the western cities and towns had not helped him, and Holofernes, his captain, was given one hundred and thirty-two thousand men to use in retaliation, by laying waste their lands and sanctuaries. The mountain towns of Samaria were threatened for they were strategic

points. To protect themselves from attack by Holofernes, they were fortified. Among these places was Bethulia, whose exact location is still in doubt. It was built on a mountain-side and was a focal point of attack. Holofernes had crossed the Euphrates, had ravaged the valley of Esdraelon, and was cutting off the water-supply from Bethulia: "Therefore their young children were out of heart, and their women and young men fainted for thirst and fell down in the streets of the city, and by the passages of the gates, and there was no longer any strength in them." Achior, who had ventured to tell Holofernes and his king of the secret source of help of these strange Israelites—that they could not be conquered as were other peoples because of their Jehovah—had been thrown over the wall of the camp, apparently dead, into Bethulia where he revived and told the Jews of the conditions at the camp of Holofernes. Messengers came with a demand for surrender but the three elders of Bethulia, Ozias, Chabris and Charmis, asked for five days of delay. To the agonized people, Ozias said, "And if those days pass and there come no help unto us, I will do according to your word."

In Bethulia lived Judith, of the tribe of

Simeon, daughter of Merari and widow of Manasses. She had much beauty and wealth. Since her husband's death, more than three years before, she had retired to her "tent on top of her house," had put on sackcloth and fasted, except on Sabbath eves, Sabbaths and festival days. To her beauty and wealth she added gentleness and firmness of character; "and there was none that gave her an ill word: for she feared God greatly." She had a reputation for wisdom, for Ozias said to her, as he recounted the critical condition of Bethulia, "This is not the first day wherein thy wisdom is manifested; but from the beginning of thy days all the people have known thy understanding because the disposition of thy heart is good." She reproved the elders for fixing a limit to the time for help from Jehovah; she promised them aid and started upon a mysterious errand, with her maid, equipped with "a bag of figs, wine, bread and parched corn." Going to the camp of Holofernes, she sought an interview with him and told him fictitious stories about her city and her allegiance to his king. He was enthralled with her beauty but he spared her from attack. She and her maid remained close to his camp, refusing his food because she had brought her own

but, on the last night, venturing to remain with Holofernes and to encourage him to feast and drink. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in his dramatic poem, "Judith and Holofernes," has expressed her prayer:[1]

O save me Lord, from this dark, cruel prince,
And from mine own self save me; for this man,
A worshipper of fire and senseless stone,
Slayer of babes upon their mothers' breast,
He, even he, hath by some conjuror's trick,
Or by his heathen beauty in me stirred
Such pity as stays anger's lifted hand.
O let not my hand falter in Thy name! . . .
And thrice that day, by hazard left alone,
Judith bowed down, upon the broidered mats
Bowed down in shame and wretchedness and prayed:
Since Thou hast sent the burden, send the strength!
O Thou who lovest Israel, give me strength
And cunning such as woman never had,
That my deceit may be his stripe and scar,
My kiss his swift destruction. This for thee,
My city, Bethulia, this for thee.

The hour for action came; "the scimitar passed through his neck." With the head of Holofernes in the maid's bag, Judith returned to Bethulia, which was now safe from the disorganized, panic-stricken camp of the enemy.

[1] By permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

According to the final chapter of this tale of Judith, she gave the directions to Ozias and the leaders for the conquest of the camp of Asshur, after the death of Holofernes. With typical custom, "the people plundered the camp for the space of thirty days"; and they gave to Judith the tent of Holofernes, his silver cups and his furniture. The women of her city "blessed her," and made for her garlands of olive and had branches in their hands, and Judith "led all the women in the dance"; the men, in armor, sang, also. The Song of Judith, in which she led the people, is less familiar than those of Miriam and Deborah, but it is even more rhythmic and ecstatic in praise and thanksgiving, as a few of the lines will testify:[1]

Begin unto my God with timbrels,
Sing unto my Lord with cymbals:
Sing unto him psalm and praise:
Exalt him, and call upon his name. . . .
Asshur came out of the mountains from the north,
He came with ten thousands of his host,
The multitudes whereof stopped the torrents,
And their horsemen covered the hills.
He bragged that he would burn up my borders,
And kill my young men with the sword,

[1] Arrangement from "The Bible Story," Vol. III, by the Rev. Newton M. Hall and the Rev. Irving Francis Wood, Springfield, 1917. Permission of King-Richardson Co.

And throw my sucking children to the ground,
And give mine infants for a prey,
And make my virgins a spoil.
The Almighty Lord brought them to nought by the hand of a woman.
For their mighty one did not fall by young men,
Neither did sons of the Titans smite him,
Nor did great giants set upon him:
But Judith the daughter of Merari made him weak with the beauty of her countenance.
For she put off the apparel of her widowhood
For the exaltation of those that were distressed in Israel,
She anointed her face with ointment,
And bound up her hair,
And took a linen garment to deceive him. . . .
I will sing unto my God a new song:
O Lord, thou art great and glorious,
Marvelous in strength, invincible.
Let all thy creation serve thee:
For thou didst speak and they were made,
Thou didst send forth thy spirit, and it builded them,
And there is none that shall resist thy voice.

Artists have found in this story a theme for dramatic painting, like the study by Philip Vandyke at the Hague, another by Tintoretto at Madrid, and two Botticelli pictures. Jerome and some other historians have questioned the accuracy of the time and facts in the early part of this Apocryphal narrative; they have af-

firmed that there is "self-evident romance" in later chapters. In spite of such criticism, the character of Judith, with some historical background, is a strong, alluring revelation of a woman's patriotism.

Anna, the Prophetess

In the days of Jesus and the apostles, there were many women who may be classified as "Friends and Co-Workers" but few whose services in civic or religious ways have been recorded in the New Testament. Anna, the aged prophetess, is a good foil to inhuman Herodias and the other rash, conscienceless women of the period, like Salome, Bernice, and her sisters. Few are the biblical words about Anna: "And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow even unto fourscore and four years), who departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day." The tribe of Asher had been celebrated in tradition "for the beauty of its women and their fitness to be wedded to the high priest or king," says Dr. Edersheim. It is probable that

Anna did not live at the Temple but that she went there daily, taking part in the services. Her presence there, on the day when Jesus was brought up to be named, and her immediate understanding of the blessing and prophecy uttered by Simeon, "Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel," had far-reaching influence. She recognized the quotations of Simeon as the fulfilment of earlier prophecies by Isaiah and Micah. Therefore, "she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Possibly Anna, like so many others of that day, saw in Jesus the promised king as well as messiah. Surely she had intuitions of his peculiar mission to the Jews and to mankind. She was a fine example of "old age that is honorable" and useful.

Priscilla, an Apostolic Missionary

Priscilla and Aquila are always mentioned among the most devoted friends of Paul. Priscilla's name generally precedes her husband's. It has been suggested that it may be because she came from a Roman family of rank. Priscilla is the diminutive form of Prisca; both names are

found. Both husband and wife were tent-makers. When the Jews were expelled from Rome, probably under Claudius, Paul went to Corinth, perhaps with these friends; certain it is that he remained in their household. For eighteen months the trio plied their trade and preached their Gospel. Then they went with Paul to Ephesus, where their home was a meeting-place for Christians.

According to tradition, the church on the Aventine, in Rome, was named St. Prisca. There was a legendary book, "Acts of St. Prisca," in which it was related that the body of Priscilla was burned in the Ostian Way and then taken to the church in the Aventine. Another tradition relates that Priscilla was the mother of C. Marius Pudens Cornelianus, whose home was on the site of the church. In 1776 a bronze statue was found in the garden here that was said to be the memorial to Priscilla. In life, she was a humble, industrious woman, a thoughtful home-maker, and a true adherent of Christianity—a pioneer missionary and teacher.

Salutations were sent by Priscilla and Aquila, in some of Paul's epistles, to the churches at Corinth or other missionary stations: "Aquila

and Prisca salute you very much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." More significant is the reference in Romans: "Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles: and salute the church that is in their house." Doubtless, it was during the riot at Ephesus that these two friends risked their lives for that of Paul. Now they were again in Rome, performing effective service among the Gentiles. Priscilla, as well as Aquila, had good education and was instructed in the teachings of both the rabbis and Jesus, as interpreted by Paul. It was their privilege to instruct the learned Apollos, when they heard him preach at Ephesus, "mighty in the scriptures," speaking of the baptism of John. However, "they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately." Apollos was an Alexandrian Jew, who had been a disciple of John; he was eloquent and was with Paul for a time at Ephesus. Luther has suggested that Apollos was the author of The Epistle to the Hebrews. Priscilla was a woman to be honored for her persistence and her loyal service in home and in

the struggling churches. One may visualize her personality as that of a finely balanced woman, brave, helpful, and hopeful, rejoicing with Paul in the opportunity to "preach glad tidings of good things."

CHAPTER VI

FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS

THERE are many women in the Bible, younger and older, who may be classified as friends, or as helpers in many fields. We find them in the days of prophets and kings, in the times of Christ and his apostles. Women were recognized as advisers, even as leaders, among the early Jews, by their gifts of song or of prophecy, or by their patriotic courage; this has been attested by the services, already noted, of Miriam and Deborah, Huldah and Judith. More often the influence was exerted in their own homes, as with Abigail and Hannah, Mary and Martha, Lois and Eunice. Reviewing instances of happy home life in Jewish history, from Isaac and Rebekah, and Ruth and Boaz, to Aquila and Priscilla, we recall the words of Lyman Abbott in his "Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews"; "We look back along these intervening centuries and bless God that man's love for woman and woman's love for man is as old as humanity and as immortal as God."

Honored Nurses in Biblical Records

The nurse was raised to a position of honor among the Hebrews. Her place was only second to that of the devoted mother. She went with the eldest daughter to her new home—if she traveled away from her parents' care—and she was regarded with deep affection by the entire family Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, who went with Eliezer and her mistress to the home of Abraham and Issac, was given individual mention by later narrators, in a crowded recital· "And Deborah, Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried below Beth-el under the oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bacuth. This last word means "the oak of weeping." Deborah had been a faithful nurse to Rebekah; she had remained with Jacob's family, also, if we read the account right. Jacob, with his household, was journeying to the place where he had "fled from the face of his brother Esau," and where God's promise came to him, so that he set up a memorial. Deborah was probably with him and his wives and children, but she was very old; the computation makes her one hundred and forty years old in the reckoning of that

time. She had been faithful to two generations and was "honored in her death and burial."

With noble intent, but through an unfortunate accident, the nurse of Jonathan's son, little Mephisbosheth, comes into biblical record. "Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel; and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth." It was natural and thoughtful for her to seek a place of safety for her little charge, after his father and grandfather had been killed by the Philistines in the battle of Gilboa, and after their families had, perhaps, been taken captive. One cherishes the hope that the nurse lived to experience joy when, some years later, David remembered his friendship for Jonathan, inquired about his family, learned that the lad was living, and sent for him by Ziba, his servant. Amid so many incidents of bloodshed and revenge in this part of the Bible, it is refreshing to read this story of King David's kind thought for Mephibosheth, the little lame prince. He sent for him to come from the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel in

Lo-debar. The lad fell before the king in deference, as his nurse would have taught him to do; but David raised him up and assured him of his affection for his father, saying, "I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." So David ordered Ziba to till the land and produce large harvests of grain and fruits for the benefit of this lame son of Jonathan. Of course, there have been critics who have asserted the truth—that Mephibosheth was the lawful heir to Saul's throne; they have declared that David was wily and politic thus to show kindness so as to strengthen his own place as king, for fear of an uprising in behalf of Mephibosheth, just as he had asked Michal, Saul's daughter and his wife, to come back to him for political reasons. One may interpret these acts according to one's estimate of the character of David; perchance he had "mixed motives."

The service of Jehoshebeath, sister of Ahaziah the king, and wife of Jehoiada the high priest, in saving the life of her baby-nephew Joash, has already been mentioned. One may be sure that she was the teacher-mother of the

"good king," who was brought forth from his hidden chambers when he was seven years of age to take the throne from his usurping grandmother, Athaliah. To this brave, far-sighted aunt, who became his nurse and savior, he was indebted in part for the good influence which he exerted, doing "that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him."

Rahab, Who "Hid" the Spies Sent Out by Joshua

In Bible times, as in those of all later history, there were women who were scorned because they were of loose morals, of malign influence upon society. Harlots were accounted "an abomination unto the Lord"; their evil wiles were the theme of proverb-makers and prophets in the later days of social degeneracy:

Her house is the way to Sheol,
Going down to the chambers of death. . . .
And she sitteth at the door of her house,
On a seat in the high places of the city,
To call to them that pass by,
Who go right on their ways:
Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither;
And as for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him,

Stolen waters are sweet,
And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.
But he knoweth not that the dead are there;
That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

Rahab, who received the spies sent out by Joshua "to view the land of Canaan" and to report to him, is generally called "the harlot." Later authorities have doubted whether she was really a harlot. She was an innkeeper; many harlots kept these wayside houses. One who accepts the Bible story finds her so designated by later historians. Josephus regards her, not necessarily as a harlot, but as an innkeeper.

The two spies, carefully chosen by Joshua for their discretion and courage, came to the wall of the city of Jericho and found there the house of Rahab. The account says they "came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lay there." They had not entered the city unseen, however, for some one sent word to the king of Jericho, "Behold, there came in hither to-night men of the children of Israel to search out the land." The king sent his messengers to find and capture them; to Rahab's house they came with the command, "Bring forth the men that are come to thee, that are entered into thy house; for they are come to search out all the

land." Rahab was not easily daunted; she planned escape for the men by hiding them with the "stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof." Then, without fear, she lied to the searchers, telling them that as nightfall came on the men "went out; whither the men went I know not: pursue after them quickly; for ye will overtake them."

With practical sagacity, she planned the escape of the spies to the mountains, while their pursuers were gone "to the Jordan unto the fords," "she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the side of the wall. . . . And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers light upon you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way." Probably she supplied the spies with food for their period of exile. Rahab was more than a thrifty housekeeper and a valiant friend to Joshua's spies. She was a daughter and a sister, with loving feelings toward her family, even though she may have been a social outcast. She made the spies swear to her "by Jehovah," before she released them, that they would "deal kindly" with her father's house, with her mother and her brethren and sisters

AHAB AND JEZEBEL

By T. M. Rooke

and all their possessions. The spies pledged their word that Joshua and the Jews, should they enter Jericho, "will deal kindly and truly" with Rahab and her family. Josephus embellishes the tale with the words that "Joshua saved Rahab and her family and he gave her certain lands immediately and had her in great esteem ever afterwards." Frederick Richard Pickersgill has embodied the story in his picture of "Rahab Receiveth and Concealeth the Spies from Shittim."

Another quality distinguished this friendly woman from her citizens in general. She realized that the Hebrews were "Jehovah's chosen people," that they were destined "to possess the land," that the thoughtful men and women of Jericho were at heart fearful of the Hebrews. She was probably not a worshiper of Jehovah, but she had an intuitive faculty; she was responsive to the high purposes and courage of the Israelites, and she served gladly in helping forward their progress. Unless Rahab had sheltered the spies and shown herself friendly to them, the passage of the Israelites over the Jordan might have been long delayed. Her words of assurance encouraged the spies to report to Joshua: "Jehovah hath delivered into our

hands all the land." Again, Rahab was a woman who could keep a secret. The spies said to her, "But if thou utter this our business, then we shall be guiltless of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear." It was not fear, as we read the story, that made her guard their secret; she had the reticence of a trustworthy friend and helper. She said no word but followed her directions to the letter. When the men of Israel came into Jericho, she "gathered into her house" all the family. Then she "bound in the window the same scarlet thread," the same cord, by which she had effected the escape of the spies; and she and her household were saved.

The Witch of En-dor

Witchcraft was condemned among the Hebrews; it was listed with rebellion and idolatry, even by Samuel: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim." The Levitical law had said, "Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them; I am Jehovah your God." Saul, knowing these commands and the sentiments of Samuel, after the death of the prophet,

"had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land." Then came a menace to the king and his people, for the Philistines had encamped in Shunem, while the children of Israel were encamped at Gilboa. Fear came upon Saul, as he saw the military strength of the enemy. He "inquired of Jehovah" for counsel or help, but "Jehovah answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets."

In despair, Saul ordered his servants to find for him "a woman that hath a familiar spirit." The demand was for a clairvoyant, a necromancer, a prophetess with vision, not a witch in the usual meaning of the word. Such a woman was found dwelling at En-dor, near the river Kishon. Saul put on a disguise and came to her, with two men, and besought her aid; they came "by night" that the king might not be recognized. At once Saul demanded of the woman, "bring me up whomsoever I shall name unto thee." Whether she knew who Saul was when the narrative began, we cannot tell. She reminded him that Saul had driven "out of the land" all those with familiar spirits and wizards and she feared for her life, should she do as he requested. He assured her, however, "by Jeho-

vah," that she should not suffer any punishment, if she would summon a "spirit" for him. "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel."

The tale becomes dramatic at this point. The woman was frightened and "cried with a loud voice" when she saw the prophet and recognized him. The dialogue that follows between Saul and Samuel is familiar, as is the judgment upon Saul for his disobedience of Jehovah. His doom is upon him; he and his sons shall fall in battle the next day at Gilboa, and his kingdom shall pass on to David. Thus spake the prophet, called forth by the clairvoyant. It is a grim tale, with a stern lesson for the Israelites, as the later scribes intended it should have.

There is, however, a human touch that emphasizes the womanliness of this famed "witch of En-dor." She was a sympathetic friend to the king, as the final part of the narrative relates. Saul was anguished; he fell on his face upon the earth and refused all food, although he had not eaten for the day and night previous. Then the woman came to him with kindly words; she reminded him that she had done as he requested, even at the risk of her life, and, as his "handmaid," she urged him to eat bread that he

might gain strength for the morrow. When he still refused, this friend of the distraught king carried her self-sacrifice to the limit, to cater to his possible appetite: "And the woman had a fatted calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat." Josephus preaches a sermon on generosity and kindness in connection with this story of the despised woman and her "fatted calf." Artists have generally treated her as a veritable witch, weird and appalling; such is the picture by Salvator Rosa in the Louvre, where the witch stirs the fire in the tripod like the witches in "Macbeth."

The Shunammite Woman, Friend of Elisha

During the reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, and Jehoahaz, kings of Israel, Elisha was the prophet-counselor. He had succeeded Elijah, as Joshua succeeded Moses. The Moabites, under Mesha, had been defeated, after the league between Israel and Judah. As Elisha, giving counsel to the kings, passed Shunem, on his way from Mount Carmel where he lodged, he was offered hospitality by a certain "great woman." Her

name is not given, but she is known as "the Shunammite woman." She was great in wealth and social position; she abounded in hospitality and friendship for the prophet. She recognized his noble mission; she knew his long journey and frequent fatigue; she felt honored to serve him. So she planned for his comfort, and she said to her husband, "Let us make, I pray thee, a little chamber on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a seat, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither." Her husband apparently did not question the wisdom of this plan, and it was carried out.

Elisha was duly grateful, and he sought for some service which he could do for his friend or her husband. Should he speak for them to the king? Would her husband esteem a place that might be given to him by "the captain of the host." There is indication of the woman's dignity and unassuming station in her reply: "I dwell among mine own people"; she was a home-maker, without social or political ambitions. There was, however, one ambition, one desire unfulfilled, in this home of peaceful prosperity. Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, discovered this and reported it to the prophet; "Verily

she hath no son, and her husband is old." Again as in the stories of Sarah and Rachel and Hannah, there came an apparent miracle, and a son was born.

There is another dramatic scene in this life-story of a faithful woman friend. The child was grown and was out in the harvest-fields with his father: The hot sun caused a sudden illness, for he cried to his father, "My head, my head." The boy was taken to his mother; sitting on her knees until noon, he died. Acting upon some impulse or faith, she carried him up to the prophet's bed and placed him there. Then she "shut the door upon him and went out." She did not sit down in supine grief, however, but summoned the servants to saddle an ass for her, "that I may run up to the man of God, and come again." As so often happens in a time of domestic crisis, the woman was the alert, resourceful person. Her husband queried; "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well." Such was her faith; it prompted action, and she would do her part to restore life to her son. "Slacken me not the riding, except I bid thee," is her command to the servant.

Elisha seemed to have no intimation of the

trouble which had come upon his friends. He greeted her with the words, spoken by Gehazi as proxy: "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" She replied, "It is well." Her affair was not with the servant but with "the man of God." She "caught hold of his feet" in her anguish and even reproached him for giving her this son, if she must lose him. When Gehazi would thrust her away, Elisha restrained him: "her soul is vexed within her; and Jehovah hath hid it from me." Evidently the prophet could not hasten as fast as his servant could; Gehazi was accordingly commanded to take Elisha's staff, to hurry without speaking to any one, and to place the staff upon the face of the child. The prophet followed the mother. When he came to the house and realized that the staff had not accomplished its purpose, "he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon him; and the child waxed warm." After Elisha had "walked to and fro," he returned to find that life was assured; the child "sneezed seven times, and . . . opened his eyes." Modern science may offer the explanation of animal mag-

netism, hypnotism, or other theory to account for this resurrection; others will accept it as a miracle like those of Elijah and Christ. However regarded, it is a beautiful, wistful story of friendship and its reward. "Take up thy son," said Elisha to the mother, to this Shunammite woman of resources, hospitality, courage, and faith!

Handmaids in Hebrew Narratives: Naaman's Little Maid

The handmaids of Hebrew domestic life were raised, not infrequently, to the rank of concubines or secondary wives. Such was Hagar; such was Bilhah, the maid of Rachel, and Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah. Leah rejoiced in the sons that her maid bore to Jacob and called them Gad and Asher, names that signify "fortune" and "happy." In later times the term "handmaid" was used with honor. When Mary, mother of Jesus, received the Annunciation, she said to the angel, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Always, however, there was discrimination between the child of the legal wife and that of the handmaid, from the days of Abraham to those of Paul. Said Paul, writing

to the Galatians, in analogy: "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh; but the son by the freewoman is born through promise."

Of all the "maids" mentioned in biblical history, none has surpassed "Naaman's little maid" for poetry and friendly service. She was a captive who had been taken in raids which the Syrians had made upon Palestine about 895 B. C. Her story, in textual sequence, follows close upon that of Elisha and the Shunammite woman. We know very little definitely about this little maid. We do not know her name or her age. We can find her marked traits in a vivid silhouette of her character. She was sympathetic, keen, and fearless, loyal both to her own country and religion and to the household of her Syrian master. To see the proud, valorous captain reduced to a loathsome leper, stirred all her pity and her friendliness. She had a faith that he might be cured; she would venture to express that faith to her mistress. The confidence of the household in the maid's fidelity and suggestion bore fruit. At first, it seemed to the proud Naaman an insult

to be told, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times," by the Israelitish prophet whom the little maid had promised would be his restorer. Naaman, with his chariots and wealth, expected some miracle commensurate with his rank. The Jordan was a small, despised stream, compared with the greater rivers of Damascus, Abanah and Pharpar. At length, perhaps urged directly or indirectly by the maid herself, he was persuaded to follow the directions of Elisha. He returned in a new humility of spirit, to pay tribute and to offer a "present." There is a sad anticlimax—but a very human one—to this tale of Naaman's gratitude and its expression—the "graft" of Elisha's faithful servant Gehazi, and his punishment of leprosy.

While the little maid, attending upon the wife of the Syrian captain, waited for her lord's return and the "news," in those days of slow travel and of no other form of communication, one may imagine her feelings. The loyal, warm-hearted girl has been depicted in poetry and imaginative literature many times; none has surpassed John Drinkwater, in his "Preludes." He has chosen to make her older in years than the usual interpretation. He describes her romantic sentiments toward the great captain,

cherishing a silent, tragic affection for him, in contrast with the coldness of his wife, already noted. Her loneliness and fear of offending her mistress are suggested with genuine sympathy, as are her few compensations: [1]

And she had but two joys. One, to remember
A Galilean town, and the blue waters
That washed the pebbles that she knew so well,
Yellow in sunlight, or frozen in the moon,
A little curve of beach, where she could walk
At any hour, with an old silver man
Her father's father, her sole companion.
Who told her tales of Moses and the prophets
That lived in the old days. And of that time
She had but now poor treasuries of the mind,
Little seclusions when, the day's work done,
She made thought into prayer before she slept;
These, and a faded gown which she had brought
Into captivity, patterned with sprigs of thyme,
And blades of wheat, and little curling shells,
And signs of heaven figured out in stars,
Made by a weaver that her grandsire knew,
A gift on some thanksgiving. She might not wear it,
Being suited as became a slave, but often
At night, she would spread it in her loneliness,
And think how finely she too might be drest,
As finely as any proud woman of them all,
If the God of Israel had not visited her
Surely for sin, though she could not remember.

[1] "Preludes," 1923. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

Thus one joy was. And then the Lord Naaman,
This wonder soiled, this pitiful great captain
Forbidden all that he had so proudly been—
To worship him, that was her other joy.

The poet portrays her as she follows the captain, in lonely imagination and prayer, and waits feverishly for his return; then she dons her "faded gown" and watches, from a distance, the triumphal celebration, which would never have been possible but for her friendly, loving service.

In admiration for Judith, the patriot of Bethulia, one would not forget the faithful service of her maid. Not alone was she the companion and guardian of her mistress but she was the bearer, back to Bethulia, of the severed head of the great captain, Holofernes, hidden in her bag of food but never absent from her frightened yet self-controlled mind. In the recital of Peter's miraculous release from prison, special mention is made of Rhoda, the maid at the home of Mary, mother of Mark, where Peter hastened after his angel guide had left him. Says the account: "And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy but ran in and told that

Peter stood before the gate." It is a human, appealing touch!

Women Who Were Comrades and Friends of Jesus

No one can read the life of Jesus without being impressed by the number of women who shared his comradeship and ministered to him in varied forms of friendly service. Jesus gave to womanhood a new valuation. He treated women with chivalrous courtesy; he gave them intellectual appreciation. They ate with him; they journeyed with him, in spite of the dismay of the Pharisees, sometimes in defiance of the customs adhered to by his disciples. They listened to his preaching and they witnessed his miracles upon the same social level as the men companions. He used womanhood for many of his illustrations and parables—the ten virgins at the wedding, the woman who had lost her marriage bracelet-coin, the women grinding corn at the mill, and in other instances. He restored some of the older Hebrew sentiments of respect for women that had lapsed under corruption and pharisaism. He, however, was not bound by the custom prevailing among Eastern people, even to our present day of separating

women from men, in public places. Says H. J. Van Lennep in "Bible Lands": "Promiscuous assemblies of men and women are unknown; and even when a crowd collects to see some sight or gaze at a show, the sexes are always grouped in two distinct and separate portions. A man never walks in the street by the side of his wife or daughter, but, when he happens to be out in their company, is sure to keep several paces in advance of them."

In turn, women gave to Jesus their ardent loyalty, their practical help and comradeship. One of the most manly of men—in truth, the finest type of manliness ever known—Jesus was, also, one of the most sympathetic and tender in his intuitions about women; he had for them the "understanding heart" for which Solomon prayed. Jesus received women as his disciples and friends. It is to be noted, as Dr. Abbott has emphasized, that, "they did not teach." This may be explained by the attitude of Jesus on the question or, more likely, by the impossibility of such a situation, or by the refusal of the Jews to receive such teaching during the life of Jesus. All great reformers have found women among their most responsive disciples. The same is true, unfortunately, of impostors and

fanatics. The quick sympathies and emotions of women respond to appeals; they are valuable supporters, when their intuitions and judgments are sound, of all "causes" of moral and spiritual advancement.

Luke mentions several women by name as among those who followed Jesus and "ministered unto him of their substance." They are said to have gone about with him, as he went "through villages and cities, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God." With them were the twelve disciples. "Certain women" had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—"Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others." Mary of Magdala will be spoken of later in this chapter. It has been surmised that Chuza was the nobleman whose son was sick unto death at Capernaum and was healed by Jesus; "he and his household believed." Joanna was rich and influential at court, yet she followed this despised preacher to the very end and was at his tomb to anoint his body for burial. Susanna is unknown except by name. If the primal motive for this friendship for Jesus was gratitude on the part of these

women, their persistent fidelity was due to his inspiration and to his sympathy with their desire to become more worthy of his comradeship. The condition of state and church was such, when Jesus came, that every one of high aspirations, every one of free spirit, eagerly accepted this man "who spake with authority and not as the scribes." Women always suffer most keenly in a time of political upheaval or moral deterioration; it was natural that the women of finer type should pledge their lives and means to help forward what they believed would be a purified Judaism, a nationality that could shake off the tyranny of Rome and the bigotry of pharisaism.

Mary, Mother of Mark; Peter's Wife's Mother

Salome, the mother of James and John, "Zebedee's children," has been considered in an earlier chapter. Her pride in her sons and her zeal for them have been cruelly misconstrued. She and her sons "worshipped" Jesus, says Matthew in telling the story. Jesus had carefully explained the spiritual kingdom, under analogy of the householder and his vineyard and his only son whom they killed; he had foretold

his captivity, death, and resurrection to the disciples, but they could not understand. How could Salome, with her imagination fixed on earthly triumphs, comprehend what was slowly revealed to his disciples after the events had fulfilled his prophecies? This request of the mother, coupled with the self-assurance of the two sons, caused jealous anger on the part of the other disciples. Very human was the situation: "And when the ten heard of it they were moved with indignation against the brethren." It often happens in life that a mother's ambitious projects for her children bring disfavor rather than appreciation for them. Jesus kindly explains this new truth of Christianity, that of humility, so that Salome, his true friend and helper—perhaps his aunt—may understand this as well as the disciples: "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mary, wife of Clopas and mother of John sur-

named Mark, was another hostess and friend of Jesus and the disciples. She was sister of Barnabas. Her home in Jerusalem was a meeting-place for the Master and his followers during his life; it was used by the apostles after his death and resurrection. There is a tradition that this house was of considerable size and was situated on Mount Zion; another tradition says it was used later as a church. Mary was at the cross, with the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. By John, who should have reported accurately, she was here mentioned as "Mary the wife of Clopas," preceded by the phrase, "and his [Jesus'] mother's sister." Lyman Abbott and other scholars regard these as two women, and consider Salome as the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus When Peter was miraculously released from prison by the angel, he went at once (when the angel left him at the first street beyond the gate) "to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying."

At Capernaum lived another woman-friend of Jesus, the mother-in-law of Peter. We are not told more of the wife of Peter or her mother, but one incident stands out vividly, as told by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Jesus had cured the

centurion's servant of palsy at Capernaum, just as he entered the city. Then he turned aside to the home of Peter, probably for rest; there he found the senior home-maker "sick of a fever." It might have been of the malarial type so common in the vicinity of Capernaum, where marshes abound. Luke, the physician, calls this "a great fever," indicating that she was very ill. According to Mark and Luke, Jesus was asked to cure her; Mark adds that "he took her by the hand and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her." In the sentence in Matthew which recounts this woman's immediate recovery the last pronoun is significant in the newer version: "and she arose, and ministered upon *him.*" The older translation was "to them." It is pleasant to visualize this woman raised suddenly to strength after an enervating fever and "ministering" to the physical comfort of Jesus at the end of a busy day, which must have drained his own vitality to a certain degree.

The Woman Who "Touched Christ's Garment" and Was Healed

Tradition has given Bernice as the name of the woman who touched Christ's garment and

was healed of a long-standing illness. Another tradition calls her Veronica, with a home at Cæsarea Philippi, where there was an ancient statue of her, showing her as she touched the fringe of Christ's robe. The legend has it that the Emperor Julian (or possibly Maximus) had the statue destroyed; for this he substituted one of himself, which was destroyed by lightning. Another story is that she was a princess of Edessa, who had spent her fortune in seeking a cure for her illness. More traditions are found in the versions of her story in the Apocryphal books of Acts of Pilate and Gospel of Nicodemus.

Turning from fancies to biblical facts, we note, first, that she was a woman of social position who shrank from publicity and yet had faith in the healing power of Jesus. So, as he was on his way to bring life to the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, she pressed against him in the midst of the crowd. For twelve years she had been ill, "and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." With a courage that can scarcely be understood to-day, she was determined to touch the garment of Jesus, believing that the touch

would bring about her healing. The Pharisees shrank from contact with a woman in the street, so that she was bravely facing a possible excommunication, or humiliation for her daring. Her faith was rewarded, for her disease was healed. "Many things" that she had "suffered" of many physicians would include exorcisms and charms, rather than scientific treatment.

"Who touched my garments?" was the question of Christ. It seemed a foolish question to the disciples. It was doubtless asked by Jesus for two reasons: to find out whether the person who had touched him was in need of further aid; and, perhaps, to test the person's faith. It is evident that Jesus felt "that the power proceeding from him had gone forth," as the new version reads—that his healing power was consciously used. The Jews regarded the "fringe of the garment" with "a superstitious reverence"; Jesus was emphasizing that his personality, his divine power, not his garment, had accomplished the cure. The woman responded well to the questions; she did not run away, with her new gift of health, nor did she make any pretense; she came, "fearing and trembling . . . and fell down before him, and told him all the

truth." So she went away with his blessing: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." One may believe that she became a good friend to Jesus, for she had persistence, gratitude, integrity, and faith, as well as renewed health for his service.

The Syrophenician Woman

There is another woman, less familiar than many of those in biblical stories, whose faith in Jesus was extraordinary and brought its reward. It was after the feeding of five thousand, and Jesus had been enduring much controversy on the part of the Pharisees over his new freedom from worn-out ceremonials. So he went away "into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it." He was in need of rest for body and spirit, and so he came away from Galilee. There was "a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit," or "a devil," and the mother's heart was agonized. She had, doubtless, "suffered many things" from the impostors and exorcists of her time and country. She was a Syrophenician, of a "mixed race," much despised by the Jews. She heard, however, that Jesus had come into her vicinity, and

she was fearless with a deep, maternal courage. The disciples would send her away when she cried out to Jesus, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon." She was a Canaanite in religion, but she was a mother; possibly, she was a proselyte. Any appeal that she could make for her afflicted daughter could not be omitted. At first Jesus did not answer her. Possibly he was very weary and needed rest from further exertions of spiritual power. Such a cure would bring crowds to him; he was, indeed, obliged to depart afterward. Possibly, as is generally explained, he shared somewhat the feeling of the Jews toward the Syrophenicians. This interpretation is contained in the words of Mark, implying that Jesus came first to the Jews: "And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." Or the words in Matthew: "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The usual explanation of this sentence does not seem in harmony with the sympathy of Jesus and his broader teaching toward the Gentiles.

The mother would not be rebuffed by his silence; she persisted. "And his disciples came

and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." Then her persistence and faith won the Master's sympathy. That was a clever answer which she made to his comment about the "children's bread cast to the dogs"; for she answered in words that have been used through the centuries; "Yea, Lord: even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." This woman's persistence, her keen mind and anguished heart won her case; Jesus yielded to her appeal with friendly words: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt." She returned to her home to find her daughter well and to reverence and love the Healer and Teacher. It has been suggested by Lyman Abbott and other commentators that Jesus never intended his words as a rebuke to her but as a lesson to his disciples, through her intuitive answer and her faith.

The Daughter of Jairus

Matthew, the publican, the tax-gatherer for the Roman Government, was unpopular because of his work, but he gave a feast for Jesus and his disciples that aroused the scorn of the Pharisees. Jesus had spoken to them, and to the disciples of John, about true fasting and re-

ligion. Even as he was talking with them a certain ruler of the synagogue, Jairus by name, rushed in, fell in worship at his feet, and begged him to come and lay his hands in healing upon the little daughter of this elder's household, who was "at the point of death." It was an urgent appeal made by a man of authority among the Jews. She was his only daughter, says Luke, about twelve years old. Jesus loved children; he sympathized deeply with agonized parents. He started upon his way to help the father to save his child. The mob pressed upon him and he was delayed by the incident already cited of "the woman with an issue of blood," who touched the fringe of his garment in her faith and was cured after years of suffering at the hands of superstitious exorcists and fakers.

Mark says that as Jesus was speaking to the woman a messenger came from the ruler's house with the word that the maiden had died. With tender comfort, Jesus said to the stricken father, "Be not afraid; only believe." With prompt action, he put out of the room the wailing friends and the professional "mourners"; he kept with him Peter and James and John, his disciples, and the father and mother of the girl. It was been suggested that she was in a state of

coma, but this is an evasion of the facts as narrated. Vivid is the scene: "And taking the damsel by the hand, he saith unto her, Talitha cumi"; this was the Aramaic dialect instead of the Greek that Jesus used before Pilate and at other times; it means, "Damsel, arise." It is an inspiring phrase, found to-day on an occasional hospital or home for the resurrection of "dead souls." With his practical wisdom, Jesus ordered food for the damsel, as she "rose up, and walked."

The Woman of Samaria

The woman of Samaria, coming on a hot day to the well which tradition said was dug by Jacob, to fill her pitcher from this perennial spring, and lingering there to talk with Jesus, is a picturesque figure in biblical story and in art. Jesus, again wearied by constant service for others in natural and supernatural ways, was sitting at the well to rest, while his disciples had gone into the town of Shechem, or Sychar, to buy food. He had said farewell to John Baptist; he was traveling from Judea into Galilee. It was the most direct route through Samaria, although some of the more bigoted Jews avoided contact with their despised neighbors by going

through Perea. The bitterness of feeling between Jews and Samaritans dated from the division of the kingdom of David and Solomon, when Rehoboam selected Shechem as his capital city. Later the city of Samaria was built by Omri, the grandfather of Athaliah. The colonists suffered from wild beasts, and it was thought this came as punishment because they worshiped heathen gods. So they sent for priests of Israel to teach them "true worship." A "mixed religion" was the result, and antagonism developed which reached a crisis at the time of the building of the Temple, as is told in Ezra and Nehemiah. A rival temple was built at Mount Gerizim, where, by tradition, the sacrifice of Isaac was stopped; and a Samaritan Pentateuch was written which claimed to be more ancient than that of the Jews. Lyman Abbott says in his "Jesus of Nazareth," "Samaria became the Texas of Palestine where all violators of Jewish law found an easy refuge from offended justice."

It has been suggested that the woman came at noon rather than at night, as was the custom, that she might avoid the women gossips who frequented the well at eventime as a social center. She had been married five times and was

now mistress of a sixth man—an indication of the lax morality of her type. Probably she paid no attention to the stranger who sat upon the well, because it was evident that he was a Jew by his dress, and she knew well that "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Least of all would she expect him to speak to her in a public place, whether she were Jew or Gentile. Jesus saw an opportunity for social service. He tactfully prefaced his reforms with a request. Doubtless, he was thirsty as well as weary. Her ungracious answer, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?" may have expressed surprise more than inhospitality. How gently Jesus answered her, making use at once of the spiritual symbols, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." It was a mental challenge as well as a religious one; the woman responded, still resentful in mood and taking his words literally: "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?"

With more careful analogy Jesus explained to her this "living water." It was a moment of illumination for the woman of checkered life and many passions. Could she secure such a boon, so that she need not come every day to the well, to carry home the heavy pitcher? The meaning of Jesus and his divine insight into her life came to her in a flash of intuition when he had adroitly urged her to summon her husband, then reminded her of her past marital experiences and her present immorality. Then she realized that he "was a prophet." A part of the conversation seems to be omitted here, by reason of the swift change to the subject of place of worship at Jerusalem. To this awakened inquiring woman bereft of all her resentment, Jesus spake those words of wonderful beauty: "God is a Spirit [or "is Spirit"]: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." I recall, with impressive memories, a sermon by Maude Royden from this text, drawn from this incident.

The sequel of the story is significant. Undeterred by the objections of the disciples when they found him talking with her, Jesus affirmed that he had "meat to eat that ye know not of"; that he had been doing "the will of him that

sent'' him. The conversation with the woman had given Jesus spiritual exaltation and satisfaction. The woman went back to her city, to tell the Samaritans of her marvelous discovery and to prepare a cordial welcome there for Jesus, so that ''they besought him to abide with them: and he abode there two days.'' The testimony of the woman had not been rejected but had been supplemented by their own conversations with this ''Messiah who is called Christ,'' of whom the woman had already heard and whom she now worshiped. It is easy to imagine the joy of this woman, and probably her moral recovery, during the days that Jesus tarried in Sychar. She had made a friend of Jesus; she would give him the full response of her mind and heart. Was not the germ-idea of the parable of the ''good Samaritan'' possibly conceived during these two days in the midst of friendly hospitality?

''The Woman Who Was a Sinner'' and Her Tribute

The woman who followed Jesus in penitence and worship, who paid her tribute to him in the house of Simon a Pharisee, has too often been confused with Mary Magdalene and Mary, sis-

ter of Lazarus. Hers was a separate personality, as I interpret the text. The Latin Fathers and some later critics, Catholic and Protestant, affirm that this is another version of the event described by Matthew, Mark, and John; this specific narrative is found in Luke alone. On the other hand, the time and circumstances are dissimilar. The Simon at whose house Jesus was given his later tribute of "alabaster ointment" was a leper; this Simon was a Pharisee and in prominence as host. The time was not just before the last week of the life of Jesus, as in the later episode, but while he was in Galilee before his final disagreements with the Pharisees. Moreover, the objection to this act on the part of the woman was not because of "extravagance," as told in the other narrative, but because "she was a sinner." She was "a woman of the city," or, in our language, "a woman of the streets." Somewhere, at some time, she had come under the influence of Jesus and was eager to record her gratitude. Was she the woman of whom he had said, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone"? This woman had been "taken in adultery"; she was brought into public disgrace by the scribes and Pharisees, "set in the

midst" of them; she was doomed to death under the old Levitical law. Perhaps they were trying to entangle Jesus into making some statement which would be used against him with Herod, who was living in unlawful wedlock with Herodias. Was it the woman of this occasion to whom Jesus said, when her accusers had gone away, "Woman, where are they? did no man condemn thee? And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more." It is not possible to verify this assumption. Sure it is that the woman who followed Jesus to the house of Simon had been given "a new lease of life" by Christ, that she had bought an alabaster cruse of ointment with hard-earned money, that she might show her love and reverence.

When she arrived behind the Master, she noted that Simon, as host, had failed in two points of etiquette. He had not furnished a basin of water for the feet of the dust-covered traveler; he had not given him a "kiss of salutation." Perhaps Simon showed thus that he considered Jesus his social inferior; perhaps it was a case of neglect. The woman, before she opened her box of ointment, wept and kissed the

feet of Jesus and dried them with the long hair upon her head as she knelt before him. Apparently this woman had come unseen into the room where Simon and his guests were reclining at the table. This would be easily accomplished if the room was on the open courtyard, as in many Palestinian homes. Simon saw her, but he refrained from speaking hard words to her because he thought this would test the prophetic insight of Jesus; if he were what his disciples claimed for him, he would divine that she was an outcast and send her away. Perhaps Jesus read the unspoken thought on Simon's face. He used the opportunity to teach a lesson of forgiveness and charitable consideration by speaking that beautiful parable of the creditor and his debtors. Emboldened by the host's possible sneers, Jesus sent the message home by reminding him of his remissness in regard to furnishing water and oil for cleansing and anointing. Then he turned to the woman, kneeling in penitence and adoration, and spoke those significant and much-discussed words, "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much. . . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." So she was dismissed with a blessing and went away to control her passions and live an honest life.

With graphic words has M. Papini in his "Life of Christ" emphasized the true meaning of this incident, the real character of this woman when she came to anoint Jesus; "This sinning woman who entered the house of Simon with her box of alabaster was no longer a sinner. . . . She was no longer a woman for hire; she had heard Jesus speak, and was no longer the public woman, flesh on sale for masculine desires. . . . The woman who had belonged to every one had learned that there is a love more beautiful than lust, a poverty richer than clinking coins."[1] With sympathetic insight Hartley Coleridge poetized this same scene:

> She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair,
> Still wiped the feet she was so blessed to touch;
> And he wiped off the soiling of despair
> From her sweet soul, because she loved so much.

Jesus did not offend further by retaining her at the table. He knew that her personal love for him was coupled with her gratitude for his forgiveness and for his encouragement for future peace of soul as well as cleanliness of body. One can readily imagine the effect of this incident upon Simon, a typical Pharisee. Doubtless, he

[1] "Life of Christ," by Giovanni Papini, 1923. By permission of Harcourt, Brace & Co.

thanked "God that he was not as other men were."

Mary of Magdala

Thus far we have found, among the friends of Jesus, many women of smirched or questionable reputation. Jesus seemed to respond by especial tenderness to the soul-cry of such women. He became the first champion in history of the unfortunate women who had been driven or cajoled to lives of social impurity. To such he opened the first "door of hope." Older commentators have listed Mary Magdalene among this class of women. Later biblical scholars, however, give another interpretation to her character. Her name was not Magdalene, "the penitent," but Mary of the town of Magdala, near Tiberias and the old watch-tower. Lightfoot explains her name with reference to "a plaiter of hair" or a woman of "light character." Eusebius says there may have been two Magdalenes. Some writer has suggested that she was the daughter of the Syrophenician woman from whom the "demons" were cast away by Jesus. At some time, into her stricken life, tormented by "seven demons," Jesus had brought his cura-

tive power. This old phraseology is loosely used for physical and moral diseases, hence the popular conception of her in the past as a profligate.

It is certain that she was a woman of social standing from her constant association with Mary the mother of Jesus, his aunt, and the other women who followed him on his journeys and were with him at the cross and tomb. No recital of the story of Easter day is complete without remembrance of Mary of Magdala at the tomb and her strange joy. To this woman, with her deep, emotional nature, her quick decisions and generous impulses, it seemed impossible to believe that her Messiah, her Healer and Saviour, was dead. He had brought into her life such manifestations of his divine power that she felt assured he would either save himself upon the cross, by a miracle, or "rise from the dead the third day," as he had said. She is mentioned by Matthew with "the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre," after Joseph of Arimathea, a rich member of the sanhedrim or a "councillor," but a believer in Jesus, had wrapped the body and laid in a new tomb, and departed.

The narratives of Resurrection Morn differ

so much in the four Gospels that it is difficult to ascertain the true sequence. John says that Mary Magdalene came "first" to the sepulcher "early while it was yet dark," and gave the alarm to Peter and John that the stone had been rolled away and that Jesus was not there. Other accounts include her with Mary, mother of James, and Salome, who came to anoint the body with spices. The essential thought is that this woman, who had been close to Jesus in friendship during his lifetime, found his spirit and received comfort from his words on that Easter morning. Her grief when she found the tomb empty was assuaged, not alone by the vision of the angels at the entrance to the tomb, but even more by the voice of Jesus. That is a dramatic narrative, with deep religious feeling, which John tells of Jesus talking to Mary Magdalene as she wept: "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" It was natural that she should think "he was the gardener." Jesus stood behind her; she, probably, did not turn to see him. Even his voice was not familiar to her ears until he spoke her name, "Mary." Then, with amazement and holy joy, she turned and said unto him, "Rabboni," or "Teacher." The other women had gone back to their homes when

the body of Jesus was not found at the tomb; Mary had remained and had been blessed with assurance that her friend, the Saviour of the World, was spiritually alive. Painters have usually chosen to portray this woman as young and beautiful, sometimes with golden hair, sometimes with black. Often the crucifix is beside her or an angel at the tomb. Guido Reni painted several faces of this Mary; those in the Louvre and the National Gallery, London, are most familiar. She has been interpreted, also, by Rubens and Titian, Murillo and Veronese. In religious poetry she is too often regarded as "a sinner" rather than a whole-hearted, strong-willed woman who was restored from illness to health by Jesus and became one of his most influential, devoted friends.

One of the beautiful traditions associated with this woman is embodied in the poem, "The Rose of Jericho," found in "A Pilgrim in Palestine," by John Finley:[1]

"What though the Flowers in Joseph's garden grew
Of rarest perfume and of fairest hue,
That morn when Magdalene hastened through
Its fragrant, silent paths?

[1] 1919. By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

"She caught no scent of budding almond tree;
Her eyes, tear-blinded, still from Calvary,
Saw neither lily nor anemone—
Naught save the Sepulchre.

"But when the Master whispered 'Mary' lo!
The Tomb was hid; the Garden all ablow;
And burst in bloom the Rose of Jericho—
From that day 'Mary's Flower.' "

Mary and Martha: Contrasts in Temperament

These two women, Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus, stand in the foreground of the life of Jesus. They have been the topic of innumerable sermons and much misinterpretation. They are of interest to a psychologist, to an analyst of contrasting natures, apart from their share in the story of Jesus. Their types are with us to-day, as they have always been—the busy, practical, irritable, loyal woman, foiled by the dreamy, lethargic, spiritual companion. We do not know just when Jesus began to make their home in Bethany his home, whenever he was in their vicinity. Bethany was a village on the southeast slope of Mount Olivet, about fifteen furlongs, or two miles, on the Jericho road, from Jerusalem. It was the "house of Simon,

the leper," as spoken of in one place; in another it is called "the home of Martha." This has led to different surmises; one is that Martha was the widow of Simon, who was dead; another is that Simon lived, that Martha was his wife or daughter, but that Simon, because of his leprosy, was no longer at home. The later, more generally accepted interpretation makes Martha, like Mary, an unmarried sister of Lazarus. Lazarus was one of the few men-friends, other than the disciples, that are mentioned among the associates of Jesus. He "loved" Lazarus. In their home he often "tarried." It was a home of comforts, even of luxuries. Martha's supervision of the food did not imply a lack of servants; it was the delightful custom of the Jews of all generations to consider this an honorable task for the home-maker. Their tomb was in their garden—a mark of some social distinction. Mary's expenditure of about three hundred shillings for costly ointment, as a tribute to Jesus, was not reproved by her family, not by thrifty Martha even, as extravagance. They could invite friends of influence to meet Jesus here—doubtless, they often did so—but the chief delight of all the household, and their friendly Master, was a

quiet "supper" where they could talk freely and intimately.

There are three specific occasions which have been commemorated by the Gospel writers in this home at Bethany. The first, as related by Luke, was on the return of Jesus, over the Jericho road, beset with thieves, which had called forth his parable of the good Samaritan. Stopping at this Bethany home, probably unexpectedly, he finds Martha "cumbered about much serving." She was the housekeeper; she was responsible for the food and comforts of her guest as well as her family. She was tired, and probably a little cross, also. Mary, meanwhile, "sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word." It is conceivable that Martha had already called Mary to help her prepare the meal, but Mary was a sweet-tempered, irresponsible girl. Her type is not unknown; she does not mean to be lacking in helpfulness, but her mind and soul are not "fixed on mundane things." So Martha, exasperated and weary, trying to take the place of mother and sister in the household, and possibly worried about her sick father, reproved Mary, in the presence of Jesus. She should have used more gentle words, but such was not her temperament; she included Jesus in her re-

proach, as she "came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me." There is strong likelihood that this was Martha's second or third call to Mary that had been unheeded.

Let us not believe that Martha was without spiritual responsiveness because of this irritable reproach. She was a disciple of Jesus, as has been recorded elsewhere; she, also, was eager to hear his "Word," to listen to his recital of his journey to Jericho; but he and her family must be fed. If Mary would assist her, both could be at liberty to listen to the Master. Mary seemed to her to be selfish; she seems so to some of us to-day, as we read the story. Jesus was not severe in his reply to Martha. Interpreters, not Jesus, have construed this into a harsh rebuke. In the later rendering the words are kindly as well as true: "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Spiritual food is far more important than physical, said Jesus in these words. It was a truth needed by Martha; it is essentially vital to-day, when the material is

overtopping the spiritual in so many aspects of life. It emphasizes the receptive mind and soul, in contrast with the incessantly active hands and brains. One hopes that Martha would profit by this mild reproof and would not again "make such hard work" of her hospitality. Still, sympathy persists for this overburdened woman, suffering vicariously for the lonely Simon, if he lived, carrying two shares of family responsibility and anxiety, becoming hot, wrinkled, exhausted, and depressed in soul, while Mary, the serene, with unwrinkled brow, with calmness and charm in appearance, was unreproved. Mary gave to Jesus the atmosphere of hospitality; Martha prepared its symbols. At that time, the spiritual comradeship was far more welcome to Jesus than were the practical comforts that Martha was hastening to furnish.

Had Martha sat all day "at the feet of Jesus" there would have been none of the necessary nourishment. Without Mary's teachable spirit he would have been unsatisfied. St. Augustine summarized long ago the distinctive traits of these sisters: "The one was busy; the other was still; the one was giving out; the other was being filled. The Lord did not blame Martha's work but he distinguished between their

services." Evidence comes forward every year that Martha and Mary are still subjects of vital discussion. Gelett Burgess, in his whimsical booklet, "Have You an Educated Heart,"[1] has a timely message: "There is another side to the Mary and Martha story. I know them well, those two sisters. Mary loves Martha well, she will tell you, and be shocked at your question. But dear Martha is, before her time, an old woman, round-shouldered, bowed down by caring for others. In the years has Mary ever said: Straighten up, dear! You are growing crooked! Not once. Her own head high, she walks beside a sister almost deformed—whom, with an Educated Heart, she could have saved from ugliness."

The Raising of Lazarus

There is a second scene in the intimate story of Martha and Mary. It is Jesus' miraculous raising of Lazarus after he had been dead for four days. Jesus had again escaped from the multitude, across the Jordan, "into the place where John at first baptized," or at Bethabara; this is rendered as "Bethany beyond the Jordan" in later versions and is not to be confused

[1] 1923. By permission of Boni & Liveright.

with the village of Bethany where Lazarus lived with his sisters. Word was brought to Jesus that Lazarus was ill; it was an appealing message of the sisters: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Jesus did not hasten to the Bethany home, as one would expect. John, writing many years later, gave his own interpolation: "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." It is difficult to explain the words here recorded as spoken by Jesus while he waited: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." The narrator implies that Jesus waited until death should seal the illness and enable him thus to disclose his power over death.

The human side of the scene is more simple and less involved. At the risk of being stoned by the Jews, Jesus decided on the third day to start on his return journey into Judea, saying to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." Then Jesus came slowly, judging from the time he consumed, and found Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. One thing is noteworthy in the story: Martha, "when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met

him; but Mary still sat in the house." Characteristic of each is the description: Martha's incessancy must find some expression even in her sorrow; Mary's grief was quiet and restrained. Both the sisters say the same words of faith in the power of Jesus, yet with reproach and hopeless grief: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Neither of them could understand the cryptic words of Jesus beginning, "I am the resurrection, and the life." Martha's faith was strong, but it could not accept the ultimate proof, although she did believe that he was "Christ, the Son of God."

Meantime, Jesus had missed Mary when Martha came to meet him; he asked for her; Martha returned to the house and called Mary "secretly," saying, "The Master [the later version is "Teacher"] is here and calleth for thee." One of the most inspiring of the many religious poems by Christina Rossetti has these words for title and motive; the opening stanzas suggest the quality:

> Who calleth? Thy Father calleth,
> Run, O Daughter, to wait on Him:
> He who chasteneth but for a season
> Trims thy lamp that it burn not dim.

Who calleth? Thy Master calleth,
Sit, Disciple, and learn of Him:
He Who teacheth wisdom of Angels
Makes thee wise as the Cherubim.

Who calleth? Thy Monarch calleth,
Rise, O Subject, and follow Him:
He is stronger than Death or Devil,
Fear not thou if the foe be grim.

So Jesus did, in truth, "trim the lamp" of Mary's faith. "Groaning in spirit," himself weeping as he saw Mary's tears, Jesus exerted his miraculous powers and brought life into Lazarus and his home in place of death. M. Papini has visualized this scene at the resurrection in terse sentences:[1]

Martha, the housekeeper, the practical, concrete character, interrupted, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." But Jesus did not heed her, "Take away the stone." And the stone was rolled away. Jesus made a short prayer, His face lifted towards the sky, drew near to the hole and called his friend in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

And Lazarus came forth, stumbling, for his hands and feet were shrouded and his face covered with a napkin.

[1] "Life of Christ," by Giovanni Papini, 1923. By permission of Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1923.

"Loose him, and let him go."

And all four, followed by the Twelve and by a throng of thunderstruck Jews, returned to the house.

The Farewell Supper and Mary's Box of Spikenard

A little later comes the third scene in the story of these sisters. It was probably the day before the triumphant entry into Jerusalem—the "sixth day before the Passover." Again he stopped at the Bethany home. Lazarus was well and able to greet his friend. "So they made him a supper there and Martha served." We may well believe it was a generous, well cooked supper. We are left in doubt whether Mary assisted this time, but one thing we are told by three of the Synoptics: when the supper was ready, and Jesus and his disciples were seated on the couches at the table, Mary "took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." It was a farewell supper for their Lord, although they did not realize this. Jesus foresaw his doom close at hand. When his betrayer, Judas, now seated with the disciples, upbraided Mary and her fam-

ily for wasting "three hundred shillings" that might be given to the poor," Jesus answered, in veiled sorrow, "Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying. For the poor ye have always with you: but me ye have not always." Matthew and Mark include the other disciples in the reproof to Mary for extravagance, and add the implication that she was disturbed by their attitude, for Jesus said to them, "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. . . . And verily I say unto you, wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of as a memorial of her."

Tennyson has immortalized Mary's tribute and her personality in the stanzas of "In Memoriam":

> Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
> Nor other thought her mind admits
> But, he was dead and there he sits
> And he that brought him back is there.
>
> Then one deep love doth supersede
> All other, when her ardent gaze
> Roves from the living brother's face,
> And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete;
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard, and with tears.

Groups of Women-Workers with the Apostles

Passing on to the period of the early Christian church, we find mention of a few women who were evidently friends and co-workers with John, Peter, Paul, Silas, Barnabas, and other apostles. Often the reference is meager—only a brief comment, mention of a name with salutation or benediction, in the Acts or the Epistles of Paul and John to the churches in Asia Minor and at Rome. The references to the "elect lady" and her household, in the Second Epistle of John, have been mentioned. She was lovable and helpful in spirit. Two women, generally called sisters, Tryphosa and Tryphæna, and their associates are saluted as those "who labored much in the Lord," in the letter to the Roman churches. "Persis the beloved" is included in the same greeting as are also Julia and "Mary, who bestowed much labor on you." Was this Mary the mother of Mark? There was, also, a mother of "Rufus the chosen in the

Lord," to whom a tender message was sent—"his mother and mine" are the words of Paul. Priscilla, who leads the list of women at Rome, has already been studied in an earlier chapter.

At Philippi Paul and Timothy had several fellow-workers who were mentioned in counsel and remembrance: "I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life." Evidently, these two women, zealous in their Christian service, had quarreled seriously. Perhaps they were deaconesses, with the joint tasks of teaching and preparing for baptism among the women and, also, caring for the sick and poor. Humanity is revealed in this passage, with the virtue of ardent zeal and the vice of personal pique or antagonism. No commentator has seemed to identify the "true yoke-fellow"; perhaps it was a reference to Epaphroditus; perhaps to Luke.

The work of Paul at Athens has sometimes been called a failure but later events entirely disprove this estimate. He speaks with kind remembrance of one woman "named Damaris,"

and of others who believed. The reference to the "household of Chloe," from whom he had heard of "contentions" among the brethren at Corinth, suggests a friend and helper. The four unmarried daughters of Philip, the evangelist, "did prophesy." This word, here used, does not refer to future soothsaying but to active service in teaching and preaching Christian doctrines. Says J. Austin Lumby, in the Cambridge Bible, commenting on this passage: "The family of the Evangelist were walking in their father's steps. These daughters, instead of resting at home, took upon them the hard duty of publishing the message of the Gospel."

Paul specifies one "Phœbe our sister, who is a servant of the church at Cenchreæ," urging the brethren to "receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matters she may have need of you; for she herself also hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self."

What was the relation of these women to the apostles? What services did they render? Eusebius said that many women, in the later days of persecution, "were no less manly than the men in behalf of the teaching of the Divine Word, as they endured conflicts with the men

and bore away equal prizes of virtue; and when they were dragged away for corrupt purposes, they surrendered their lives to death rather than their bodies to impurity." Some of the women were deaconesses; such was Phœbe, a European Greek, known to Paul at Cenchreæ, a part of Corinth; greetings to her have been quoted. She was generous and gifted. She carried—possibly she wrote it, also—an important letter and gave "ministry of help" to Paul and his companions. Other women served quietly in their homes like Lois and Eunice, performing the unequaled ministry of teaching and training their sons, so that they likewise might become preachers and missionaries.

Much has been written about Paul's attitude toward the work of women in the Christian church. While he must have recognized the work of certain women, and while he exhorted others to continue their inspiring services, as Priscilla and Phœbe and Persis, yet he reiterated his unwillingness to have women appear unveiled. He accepted the ideas of Jesus regarding the mental equality of women as silent disciples, but he insisted upon observance of certain customs. Disorder and even licentiousness might result from too lax departures from

traditional manners, especially such as affected women's modesty. His word is definite in I Timothy: "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness." Another mooted passage is that which occurs in I Corinthians, regarding women in the churches: "let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church." This advice, sent in response to questions from leaders of the church at Corinth, would indicate that women were already seeking more freedom, both in education and expression. Perhaps they may have smiled, as we are inclined to do, at that advice of Paul, almost a command, "if they would learn anything," to "ask their husbands." Paul's contention, as we read it, was not that a woman had no right to speak in public churches but that it was not expedient for her to do so; it might create dissension and lose converts. Says Dr. Arthur C. McGiffert in "The Apostolic Age," "It was generally regarded as a scandal for a woman to put herself forward in

public and the benefit her words might convey would be more than counterbalanced by the evil effect of such violation of the common rule of decency." It is certain that Paul, like other leaders, recognized the success of appeals made by some few women, but he feared any rash "letting down of the bars" of social conventions.

Dorcas, or Tabitha

Dorcas, called Tabitha in the Aramaic, lived at Joppa. This was the great seaport of Jerusalem, rich in traffic and fine homes. Luke called her a "disciple," but there is no mention of meetings that were held at her house. She was a model of uprightness and generosity; "this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." She was evidently wealthy, for many widows shared her bounty. She was a home-maker, deft and industrious with her needle. When it was thought she was dead, "all the widows stood weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them." This woman of domestic graces and lovable disposition, this householder of wide philanthropies, fell ill while Peter was at Lydda. He had cured there a man, one

THE CHARITY OF DORCAS
By W. C. T. Dobson

Æneas, "sick of the palsy," "who had kept his bed eight years." Naturally all the country-side had heard of this miraculous healing, for Joppa was near Lydda. When Dorcas died, the "disciples" sent immediately for Peter. It was an urgent word, sent by two men: "delay not to come on unto us."

It is likely that Peter knew Dorcas by reputation, if not personally. He came at once. With quick action, he sent out from her chamber all the weeping widows and others who were mourning for her. Then he knelt in prayer. "Tabitha, arise," were his words that brought life. What was her part in this resurrection? Her past life of clean living, her devout faith and obedience. She was restored to years of service for others. One may believe that she became a friend and helper to Peter and the other apostles in the many ways in which her generous heart and ample resources could serve them. She has been heroine of several works of art—the fresco in the Brancacci Chapel in the Carmine, Florence, painted by Masolino da Panicale; Guercino's work in the Pitti Gallery; and modern conceptions like the familiar grouping, "Alms Deeds; or, The Charity of Dorcas," by W. C. T. Dobson.

Did Dorcas ever know Jesus? There is no evidence on the subject. George MacDonald answers in the affirmative in his poem:

> If I might guess, then guess I would
> That, mid the gathered folk,
> This gentle Dorcas one day stood,
> And heard when Jesus spoke.
>
> She saw the woven, seamless coat,
> Half-envious for his sake:
> Oh! happy hands; she said, that wrought
> The honored thing to make.

"Dorcas societies" were more active in churches in older generations than they are today; groups of women with willing hands and generous hearts thus commemorated the practical, noble woman-friend of Joppa.

Lydia, Seller of Purple

In this twentieth century there is more kinship with Lydia, seller of purple, than with Dorcas, seamstress and home-keeper. Lydia was an alert, progressive woman of her time. Her real name may have been Lydia, or that may have been her appellation among the people of Philippi because she came from the Lydian town of Thyatira. Thyatira was on the river Lycus in Lydia. Inscriptions on the site of the old

town indicate that dyeing, especially with purple dyes, was one of its chief trades. This woman had brought some of the purple dyes—perhaps other hues, for they varied from red to sea-green and blue—from Thyatira to sell in the large city of Philippi. She may have sold dyed garments rather than dyes alone. Philippi was under Roman administration at this time; it was Roman in its language and customs. Here Lydia had a house and a household, which would imply servants and possibly some children. We have no information whether she was unmarried or a widow; she seemed to be the "head" of the family. She was a successful business woman; she was also a religious woman who never neglected worship for her trade.

Paul and Silas came to Philippi after the incident of the vision of a man who said to Paul, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," while Paul and Silas were at Troas on their missionary journey. They remained at Philippi several days, as it was the "chief city of Macedonia." When the Sabbath came they found no synagogue but a "place of prayer" by the riverside, where devout Jewish proselytes often gathered. Several women were in the company when the

apostles sat down and began to preach. Doubtless, the ceremonial ablutions, exacted by law, could best be performed near the waterside. Among the auditors were Lydia and her household. She was, probably, a Jewish proselyte. She gave "heed unto the things" which Paul spoke; Luke says the Lord opened her heart. She gave spiritual response to the Christian teaching, and she, with her household, was baptized.

Lydia had resolute courage. She might have seriously injured her trade in dyes by accepting this "new religion." Already Paul and Silas had been arousing antagonism among the envious Jews; soon afterward they were beaten and imprisoned after they had spoiled trade by healing the demoniac girl. Lydia had no scruples about facing such a possible result. She was not afraid of social criticism. With the gracious words and humility of a true gentlewoman, she extended the hospitality of her home to Paul and Silas; "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." She urged the request until she "constrained" them. To Paul this woman must have given congenial comradeship. She was well educated for her time, widely traveled,

and alert and interesting. At the same time, she had a strange, spiritual insight. We would like to know more about Lydia. She resembles, in many ways, the modern woman of ambition and efficiency. She was proud to be a wage-earner; she was proud to be a hostess and a friend to men of religious purposes. She was faithful to older forms of worship, yet open-minded to new preaching, making her decisions with courage and spiritual progress.

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NOTES

While there is no attempt to give references for the majority of biblical extracts or more familiar commentaries, which may be readily found, there are suggestions here on more obscure passages or differing opinions among interpreters and critics. Some literary allusions are, also, noted with titles of poems or books, in addition to more detailed lists in the Bibliography.

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INDEX

Aaron, 53, 133, 165, 166, 169
Abanah, 241
Abbott, Lyman, quoted, 224, 245, 249, 258
Abel, city of, 190
Abigail, 4, 13, 32, 64, 65, 66, 224
Abihail, 209
Abijah, 75, 76, 79
Abimelech, 17, 171, 192
Abishag, 42, 72
Abner, 62, 63, 73
Aboniam, 173
Abraham, 10, 11, 16, 37, 119, 120-124, 126
Absalom, 17, 189, 190
Achior, 214
Achsah, 23
Adam, 7, 8
Adriel, 142
Agrippa I, 158
Agrippa II, 102, 103
Ahab, 29, 44, 106, 196, 197, 198, 201
Ahasuerus, King, 86, 210
Ahaz, 14, 82
Ahaziah, 196, 200, 201, 202, 227
Ahijah, 74, 75
Ahinoam, 67
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, quoted, 216
Alexandra, 94, 95
Amalek, 175
Amalekites, 17, 169
Ammon, 189
Ammonites, 11, 70, 74, 179, 180
Amon, 206
Amorites, 17, 30
Amos, 15, 81, 82
Amran, 134
Ananias, 104, 105
Anna, Lady, 145
Anna, prophetess, 4, 219, 220
Antiochus, 100
Apame, 91
Apocrypha, 10, 145, 213, 251
Apollos, 222
Aquila, 13, 220
Arabia, 12, 21, 121, 123, 192
Arabian queen, 192
Aretas, 151
Aristobolus, 95, 96, 157
Armoni, 142
Arnold, Matthew, quoted, 127
Asa, 196
Asaiah, 207
Asher, tribe of, 175, 219
Ashkelon, 57
Asshur, 217
Assyrians, 21, 79
Astarte, 74, 196
Athaliah, 4, 18, 44, 118, 201-205, 228, 251
Augustus, 95
Aventine Church, 221
Azizus, 100

Baal, 196, 198, 204
Baale-judah, 63
Babylon, 83, 209
Bahurim, 63
Balkis, 192
Barabbas, 99
Barak, 31, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176

Barnabas, 249, 281
Barrias, Felix, 213
Bath-sheba, 12, 68-72
Beer, 28
Benjamin, tribe of, 18, 19, 175 179, 209
Bennett, W. H., quoted, 16
Bernice, or Berenice, 99, 100, 219, 251
Bethabara, 275
Bethany, 13, 151, 270, 272, 279
Beth-el, 127, 172
Bethlehem, 149, 185, 187, 188
Beth-maacah, 190
Bethuel, 126
Bethulia, 214, 215, 243
Betto, Bernardino, 52
Bezalel, 170
Bilhah, 11, 239
Boaz, 45, 184-188
Botticelli, 218
Broad, Astor, 187
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, quoted, 153
Browning, Robert, quoted, 72
Bruck-Lajos, 187
Bryant, William C., quoted, 143, 144
Burgess, Gelett, quoted, 275
Burns, James D., quoted, 138
Buzi, priest, 83
Byron, Lord, quoted, 80, 96, 182

Cæsarea Philippi, 251
Caius, Emperor, 161
Calderon, Philip H., 187
Caleb, 23, 67
Calpurnia, 98
Cana, 13, 147, 151
Canaanites, 17, 141, 176, 177, 254
Capernaum, 107, 246, 249, 250
Carlyle, Thomas, quoted, 5, 166
Carmel, Mount, 197, 198, 235
Cave of Machpelah, 125, 128
Cavell, Edith, 4
Cenchreæ, 283
Chabris, 214
Charmis, 214
Chebar, 83
Childlessness, 25, 26, 110
Chileab, 67
Chilion, 187
Chloe, 283
"Christus, a Mystery," quoted, 152
Chuza, 246
Claudia Procula, 98, 99
Claudius, Emperor, 221
Cleopatra, 95
Coleridge, Hartley, quoted, 265
Corinth, 221, 283, 285
Cornelianus, 221
Corot, 48
Crashaw, Richard, quoted, 109
Cushite woman, 166
Cyrus, 209

Damaris, 282
Dan, 175
Daniel, 93
Danites, 54
Darius, 90
David, 13, 60-67, 179, 189, 203, 226, 234
David's wives, 13, 17, 60-70
Deborah, nurse, 5, 127, 225
Deborah, prophetess, 3, 4, 12, 34, 170-178, 217
Delilah, 4, 58-60
Demoniac girl, 290
Diblaim, 81
Dinah, 19
"Divine Epigrams," quoted, 109
Dobson, W. C. T., 287
Dorcas, 5, 286, 287
Doris, 95
Drinkwater, John, quoted, 85, 241

Drusilla, 99, 100, 101
Dyce, William, 141

Edersheim, Alfred, quoted, 21, 44, 113, 219
Edessa, 251
Edomites, 11, 30, 70
Education in home, 38, 39, 46, 112-115
Egypt, 11, 17, 52
Ehud, 171
Elect lady, 5, 161, 162, 281
Eli, 44, 136, 137
Eliezer, 51, 125, 225
Elijah, 196, 198, 200
Elimelech, 187
Elisabeth, 25, 153-155
Elisha, 12, 235-240
Elkanah, 42, 136
En-dor, witch of, 233
Epaphroditus, 282
Ephesus, 221, 222
Ephraim, tribe of, 18, 19, 74, 133, 172, 175, 187
Esau, 128, 129, 225
Esdraelon, 31, 127, 214
Esther, 4, 86, 209-213
Ethbaal, 196
Eunice, 161, 162, 224, 284
Euodia, 282
Euphrates, 10, 214
Eusebius, 266, 283
Eve, 6, 7, 8, 9, 22
Ezekiel, 13, 83
Ezra, 183, 258

Farrar, Dean F. W., quoted, 69, 71
Fattori, Giovanni, 160
Feasts, 27
Felix, 99, 100
Festus, 99, 100
Finley, John, quoted, 269
Fosdick, the Rev. Harry E., quoted, 184

Galatians, 240
Galilee, 263
Galsworthy, John, quoted, 104
Gaza, 58
Gehazi, 236, 238, 241
Gentiles, 171, 183, 222
Genung, John F., quoted, 77
Gerizim, Mount, 258
Gershom, 51
Gibeah, 18, 143
Gibeonites, 141, 142
Gideon, 17, 31, 171, 179
Gilboa, 226, 233
Gilead, tribe of, 175, 179
Gomer, 3, 13, 82, 83
Gounod, 187
Guercino, 287
Guido Reni, 130, 269

Hagar, 119-122, 168, 239
Haman, 88, 210-213
Handel, 173
Hannah, 25, 42, 116, 136-139, 224
Harlots, 58, 140, 179, 228
Harosheth, 171
Hasmoneans, 94, 95
Hastings's Bible Dictionary, quoted, 16, 183
Hazor, 171
Heber, 177
Herod the Great, 94
Herodians, 94, 118
Herodias, 4, 157, 158, 219, 263
Hezekiah, 14
Hilkiah, 205
Hiram, King, 196
Hobab, 54, 177
Holofernes, 213-216, 243
Home life, 6, 10-41
Hosea, 3, 13, 15, 82, 83
Huldah, 3, 165, 205-209
Hur, 168, 169
Hyrcanus, 94

"In Memoriam," quoted, 280, 281
Isaac, 12, 13, 22, 122-130
Isaiah, 13, 14, 15, 79, 80, 110, 112, 220
Ishmael, 40, 122, 123
Israelites, 110, 171, 176, 180, 231, 234
Issachar, tribe of, 174, 175, 179

Jabin, 171, 177
Jacob, 11, 16, 128-132, 225, 257, 259
Jael, 34, 37, 60, 177, 178, 191
Jair, 179
Jairus, daughter of, 251-256
Jedidah, 206
Jehoiakim, 209
Jehoida, 202, 204, 227, 228
Jehoram, 44, 196, 201, 235
Jehoshebeath, or Jehosheba, 202, 203, 227
Jehu, 199, 202, 235
Jenkins, Burris, 160
Jephthah, 31, 171, 179-181
Jephthah's daughter, 28, 39, 179-182
Jeremiah, 20
Jericho, 229, 231, 232, 272
Jeroboam's wife, 75-76
Jerome, 218
Jerusalem, 220, 249, 260, 270, 279, 286
Jesus, 146-150, 184, 219, 220, 244-266, 288
Jethro, 33, 38, 50, 51, 52, 53
Jezebel, 4, 18, 44, 158, 195-201
Jezreel, 198, 199, 226
Joab, 69, 73, 189, 190
Joachim, 92, 93
Joan of Arc, 4
Joanna, 38, 246
Joash, 202-205, 227
Job's wife, 77, 78
Jochebed, 5, 133-136
John the Baptist, 158, 159, 222, 257
John the disciple, 153, 256, 268, 276, 281
Jonathan, 28, 226
Joppa, 286, 288
Joram, 199
Jordan, 230, 241, 275
Joseph, husband of Mary, 146, 148
Joseph of Arimathea, 267
Joseph, son of Jacob, 49, 50, 132, 133
Josephus, quoted, 10, 48, 49, 64, 81, 132, 158, 161, 168, 186, 189, 190, 192, 201, 205, 210, 212, 229, 231, 235
Joshua, 228, 229, 231
Josiah, 205, 206
Jotham, 14
Judas, 279
Judgment of Solomon, 140, 141
Judith of Bethulia, 4, 34, 191, 213-219
Judith's maid, 243
Julia, 281
Julian, 251
Juvenal, 103

Kadesh, 168
Kedesh-naphtali, 173
Kent, Charles Foster, quoted, 16, 176, 192
Kenites, 177
Kipling, Rudyard, quoted, 118
Kish, 142
Kishon, river, 176, 233

Laban, 31, 38, 126, 131, 132
Lappidoth, 172
Lazarus, 13, 270-276, 279
Leah, 5, 11, 130-133, 239
Leighton, Lord, 143
Lemuel, King, 40, 41, 117

Levite, 18, 105, 203
Levitical laws, 20, 21, 105, 232, 263
Lodebar, 227
Lois, 161, 162, 224, 284
Longfellow, Henry W., quoted, 152
Lot's wife, 32, 47, 48
Luke, 100, 147, 154, 246, 250, 256, 262, 272, 282, 290
Lumby, J. Austin, quoted, 283
Lydda, 286
Lydia of Thyatira, 5, 38, 118, 288-291
Lysias, 100

MacDonald, George, quoted, 288
McGiffert, Arthur C., quoted, 285, 286
Machero prison, 159
Machur, 175, 227
Magnificat, 146
Mahanaim, 141
Mahlon, 187
Malachi, 20, 43
Manasseh, 50, 80, 133, 179, 206
Manasses, 215
Manoah, 38, 54
Manton, G. Grenville, 77
Maqueda, 192
Mariamne, 94, 95
Mark, 38
Martha, 13, 32, 38, 244, 270-281
Mary of Magdala, 246, 249, 261, 266-268
Mary, mother of Jesus, 13, 27, 134, 145, 146, 239, 267
Mary, mother of Mark, 38, 162, 247, 248, 281
Mary, sister of Lazarus, 13, 38, 150, 224, 243, 262, 270-281
Mattan, 204
Merab, 60, 141
Merari, 215, 218
Mesusah, 114
Micah, 169, 220
Michal, 60, 61, 227
Midianites, 51
Milcom, 74
Milton, John, quoted, 8, 59
Miriam, 4, 39, 53, 133, 134, 165-170, 217
Mizpah, 19
Moab, 11, 30, 185, 235
Moore, Thomas, quoted, 169, 170
Mordecai, 88, 89, 209, 211, 212
Moses, 16, 20, 51, 52, 165-169
Mothers in Israel, 110-163
Murillo, 130, 187, 269

Naaman's maid, 5, 240-243
Naaman's wife, 84, 85
Nabal, 13, 64, 65, 66, 67
Naboth's vineyard, 198, 199
Nahor, 126
Naomi, 184, 185-188
Naphtali, children of, 174, 175
Nathan, 69
Nazareth, 146-149
Nebuchadnezzar, King, 14, 209, 213
Nehemiah, 183
Nicaule, 192
Nightingale, Florence, 4
Noah's wife, 47, 48
Normand, Ernest, 213

Obadiah, 106
Obed, 184
Oboth, 28
Omri, 196, 201, 258
Orpah, 184, 185
Othniel, 23
Outrage of Gibeah, 18
Ozias, 214, 215

Palestine, 30, 34, 240
Paltiel, 62, 63
Papini, Giovanni, quoted, 99, 265, 278
"Paradise Lost," quoted, 8
Paul, Apostle, 101-106, 117, 118, 162, 220, 240, 282, 284, 285, 286, 289
Penninah, 136, 137
Peritz, I. J., quoted, 12
Persis, 281, 284
Peter, 243, 249, 256, 268, 281, 286, 287
Peter's wife's mother, 249, 250
Phanuel, 219
Pharaoh's daughter, 71, 165
Pharpar, river, 241
Philip's daughters, 283
Philippi, 288, 289
Philistines, 17, 30
Phillips, Stephen, quoted, 96, 182, 183
Phœbe, 283, 284
Pickersgill, F. R., 231
Pilate's wife, 98, 99
Pisgah, 28
Polemo, 102
Polygamy, 16, 17, 21
Potiphar's wife, 47, 49, 50
Priscilla, or Prisca, 4, 13, 118, 220, 282, 284
Purim, feast of, 27, 209, 213

Queen of Egypt, 192
Queen of Sheba, 7, 192-195

Rachel, 11, 12, 25, 31, 110, 130-133
Racine, 90, 103, 205
Raguel, 50
Rahab, 36, 228-232
Ramah, 172
Ramathaim-zophim, 136
Ramsey, W. M., 146
Rape of Sabine women, 19
Raphael, 8, 48, 141
Rebekah, 11, 22, 125-130
Rehoboam, 17, 74, 258
Reuben, tribe of, 175
Rhoda, 243
Riddles of the East, 55, 56, 191
Rizpah, 141-144
Rome, 222
Rooke, T. M., 201
Rosa, Salvator, 235
Rossetti, Christina, quoted, 277, 278
Royden, Maude, 260
Rubens, 48, 93, 269
Rufus, mother of, 281
Ruth, 45, 183-188

Sabea, 192
Salome, 156, 159, 160, 247
Samaria, woman of, 33, 257, 258
"Samson Agonistes," quoted, 59
Samson's wives, 54, 55, 57, 58
Samuel, 32, 116, 137, 232, 233
Sapphira, 104, 105
Sarah, 10, 11, 25, 32, 119, 120-124
Saul, 60, 61, 62, 141, 179, 227, 233
Schubert's "Song of Miriam," 169
Sennacherib, King, 79, 80
Shallum, 205
Shaphan, 207
Sheba, 190, 191
Sheba, queen of, 190, 192-195
Shechem, 258
Shunammite woman, 4, 12, 38, 235-238
Shunem, 233, 235
Shushan, 209
Sidonians, 70
Silas, 281, 289

Simeon, 27, 215, 220
Simon the leper, 262, 270, 274
Simon the Pharisee, 261, 263, 264, 265
Sisera, 37, 171, 173, 174-177
"Sketches of Jewish Social Life," quoted, 21, 44, 113
Solomon's wives, 17, 69, 70-73
Song of Songs, quoted, 26, 42, 73
Sorek, valley of, 58
St. Augustine, quoted, 274
Strachey, Marjorie, 68
Sullivan, Arthur, quoted, 138
Susanna, 92, 94
Susanna, friend of Jesus, 246
Sychar, 257, 261
Syntyche, 282
Syro Phenician woman, 253, 266

Taanach, 176
Tabitha, 286, 287
Talitha Cumi, 257
Tamar, 12, 19, 32, 189
Taylor, W. L., 130, 157, 213
Tekoa, wise woman of, 189, 190
Tennyson, Alfred, quoted, 280, 281
Thermuthis, Princess, 135, 165
Thyatira, 288
Tiberias, 266
Timnah, 53
Timothy, 106, 113, 161, 162
Tintoretto, 218
Tirvah, 205
Titian, 269
Titus, Emperor, 102, 103
Tobit, 213
Tola, 179
Topham, F. W. W., 136
Tryphena, 281
Tryphosa, 281
Turner, Joseph, 142
Tyre, 253

Uri, 30, 170
Uriah, 68, 69, 73
Uzziah, 14, 81, 82

Van Dyke, Philip, 93, 187, 218
Van Lennep, H. J., 245
Vashti, Queen, 86, 87, 210
Veronese, Paul, 48, 93, 269
Veronica, 251
Vivian, 58

"War March of the Priests," 204
Widow of Nain, 107
Widow of Zarephath, 107
Widows, 105, 106, 108
Wise woman of Abel, 189, 190
Wise woman of Tekoa, 189, 190
Witch of En-dor, 233
Witchcraft, 232
Woman who was a sinner, 261, 262
Woman who touched garment, 250-253
Woman of Samaria, 257, 258
Wordsworth, William, quoted, 4, 5

Yahweh, 23, 120

Zacharias, 154, 155
Zarephath, 107
Zebedee's children, mother of, 156, 247
Zebulon, children of, 174, 175
Zedekiah, 209
Zela, 142
Zeresh, 74, 86, 88
Zerubbabel, 90
Ziba, 226, 227
Zilpah, 11, 239
Zimri, 200
Zipporah, 50, 52-54, 167
Zoar, 48

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